DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 471 407 FL 027 522

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Liddicoat, Anthony J., Ed.; Crozet, Chantal, Ed. |
| TITLE | Teaching Languages, Teaching Cultures. |
| INSTITUTION | Applied Linguistics Association of Australia.; Language Australia, Melbourne (Victoria). |
| ISBN | ISBN-1-876768-10-X |
| PUB DATE | 2000-00-00 |
| NOTE | 154p.; Earlier version published in the Australian Review of Applied Linguistics by the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia as "Teaching Language, Teaching Culture," Series S Number 14 (1997). |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Publications and Clearinghouse Manager, Language Australia, GPO Box 372F, Melbourne, VIC 3001, Australia. |
| PUB TYPE | Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS |
| DESCRIPTORS | Chinese; *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Integrated Curriculum; Language Teachers; Languages for Special Purposes; Literacy Education; Literature; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Socialization; Sociocultural Patterns; Sociolinguistics; Writing Instruction |
| IDENTIFIERS | Australia; Conversation; Globalization; Hong Kong |

ABSTRACT

This collection of papers examines what it means to teach culture as an integrated part of language from both the language learner's and the language teacher's perspectives. The 11 papers include the following: "Teaching Cultures as an Integrated Part of Language: Implications for the Aims, Approaches and Pedagogies of Language Teaching" (Chantal Crozet and Anthony J. Liddicoat); "Globalisation and the Impact of Teaching Languages in Australia" (Anne Pauwels); "Primary Socialization and Cultural Factors in Second Language Learning: Wending Our Way through Semi-Charted Territory" (Francis Mangubhai); "Everyday Speech as Culture: Implications for Language Teaching" (Anthony J. Liddicoat); "Teaching Conversation and Sociocultural Norms with Conversation Analysis" (Anne-Marie Barraja-Rohan); "Contrastive Rhetoric and the Teaching of Writing: Seven Principles" (Andy Kirkpatrick); "Teaching Literature across Cultures and across Artforms" (Louise Maurer, Piera Carroli, and Roger Hillman); "Cultural Transmission in Literacy Acquisition: A Case Study in Chinese" (Judy W.Y. Ho); "Is There a Class in This Room?" (Peter Cowley and Barbara E. Hanna); "Teaching Culture and Language for Specific Purposes: An Approach to the Development of Appropriate Teaching Material" (Gabriele Schmidt); and "Developing Pathways for Conceptualizing the Integration of Culture-and-Language" (Leo Papademetre). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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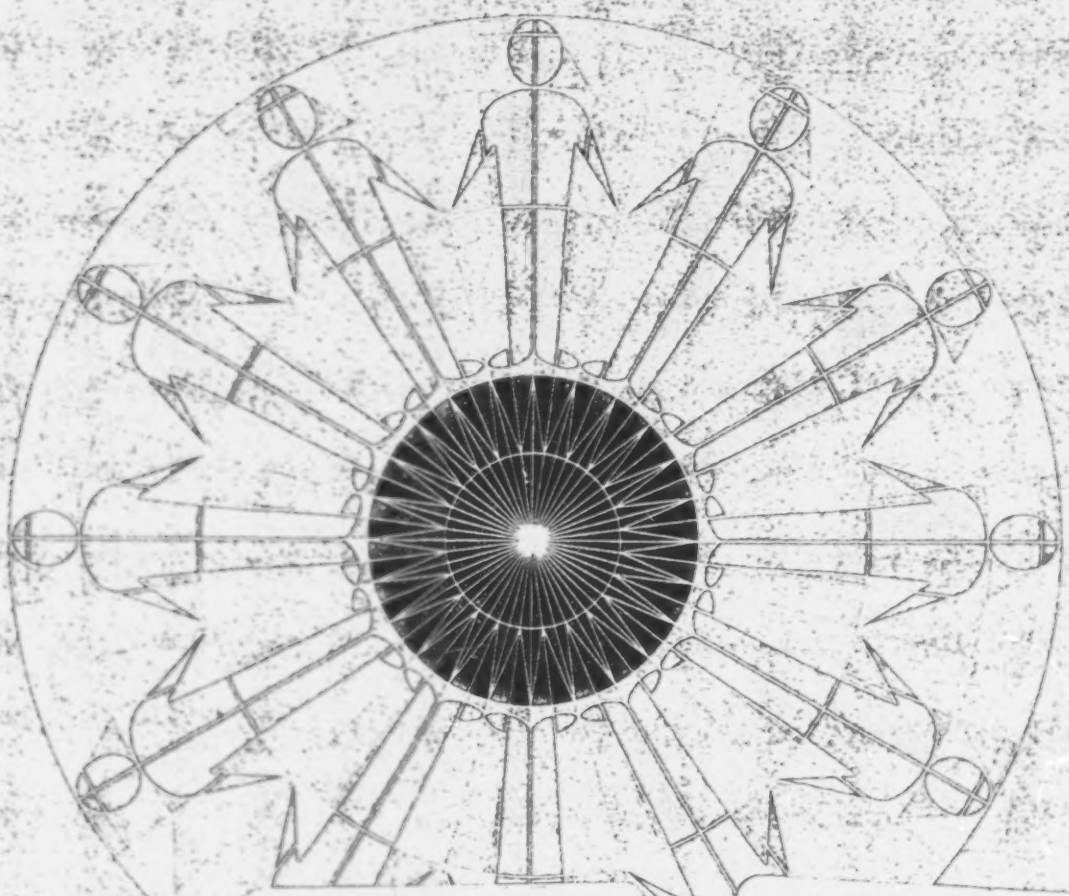
# teaching languages, teaching cultures

ED 471 407

Edited by Anthony J. Liddicoat
and Chantal Crozet



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**ERRATUM**

*On page 96, in the paragraph starting: "Calvino's novel was . . . ", there are spelling errors in the third sentence. The sentence should read:*

"Cesare Garboli (1980 ) in his review of the novel entitled "Come sei, lettrice?' [What are you like, woman reader?] described the novel as a commercial idea which turns into a theoretical proposition on the sociological and economic functions of the novel: how to make a novel, how to sell it, and also how to "produce" a reader."

*Our apologies to the authors.*

# Teaching Languages Teaching Cultures

Edited by
*Anthony J.Liddicoat*
and
*Chantal Crozet*

Applied Linguistics
Association of Australia

Language Australia

**Teaching Languages, Teaching Cultures**

Edited by Anthony J.Liddicoat and Chantal Crozet

ISBN 1 876768 10 X

This publication was first published in the Australian Review of Applied Linguistics by the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia as *Teaching Language, Teaching Culture*, Series S Number 14, 1997. This reissue has been updated and includes new chapters.

Cover artwork and design by Gabrielle Markus, Language Australia.

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# Acknowledgments

We the editors, wish to thank the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, and in particular John West-Sooby, the Editor of publications, for their assistance in preparing this volume. We also wish to thank Dave Tout our publisher at Language Australia for his hard work and Gabrielle Markus for her graphic design work on the cover of the book

# Teaching culture as an integrated part of language: implications for the aims, approaches and pedagogies of language teaching

*Chantal Crozet and Anthony J. Liddicoat*
*Australian National University*

## Introduction

Intercultural Language teaching (ILT) is now making its way as the emerging new approach to language teaching. At its core what ILT offers is an approach to teaching culture as an integrated part of language, and this has several implications for language teaching pedagogy and practice. Teaching culture in language implies an acknowledgment and understanding of the links between language and culture as well as an understanding of how communication works across cultures. In this sense the integration of culture and language constitutes new teaching content which language teachers need to assess and introduce into their teaching practice. When we introduce culture-in-language as "new content" in the language classroom, this in turn forces the review of the very goals of language learning and the language teaching profession at large.

One of the key goals of ILT is to educate language learners to develop the ability to create multiple 'third places' as they learn to interact with 'otherness' (Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco 1999). Thus teaching culture-in-language does not aim to make language learners into parrots of the target culture/language. The "third place" notion refers to a comfortable unbounded and dynamic space which intercultural communicators create as they interact with each other and in their attempt to bridge the gap between cultural differences.

The paradigm shift ILT is bringing to the profession is explored in existing and promising ways by the various contributors to this volume who look closely at what it means to teach culture as an integrated part of language from both the language learner and the language teacher's perspectives.

In this introduction we open up the reflection on our topic of interest through a discussion of the following five themes which incorporate references to each of the chapters in the volume:

- culture in Language in Language Teaching
- culture in Spoken Language

- culture in Written Language
- culture and Languages for Specific Purposes
- culture-and-Language Teachers' Professional Development.

## Culture in language teaching

In the past language teaching has meant teaching learners four skills in the target language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Once learners had acquired enough of these language skills, it was believed that they were ready to access the realm of culture. Culture in this sense was very narrowly perceived.

Traditionally, in language-based subjects, whether they be first or second languages, the work of teaching culture has been seen to a part of the work of teaching literature. In particular language students were expected to eventually gain an introduction into the canon of literary works valued in the particular society in which the language was spoken. This particular approach to culture starts with the materials produced by that culture and defines culture as the valued artefacts of a particular society. This view of culture was integrated into language teaching through those artefacts, such as novels, plays, poems, etc., which are created using language.

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, language teachers began to see that restricting culture to the high culture of a particular society was not the full picture their students needed to have. In the course of the nineteenth century, the purpose of language teaching came increasingly to be viewed as involving teaching about a country and its people (Stern 1983). Literature was just a part of such an understanding. In addition to literature, people came to see that some knowledge of the history and institutions of the speakers of the language was also important as were the social psychology of the people and their contribution to civilisation (Atkins and Hutton 1920; Fife 1931). Since this time, curricula have adjusted to include other elements in teaching for cultural understanding - social institutions, current events, newspapers, television, etc. This change has added 'popular' and 'institutional' culture to 'high' culture to present a wider view of culture and the ways in which culture is transmitted through language.

As research into culture and the relationship between language and culture has progressed, it has been increasingly recognised that one important aspect of culture has been omitted from the equation. This missing dimension is the cultural basis of the ways in which people communicate. Culture underlies the ways in which language is used to create texts, whether these texts are written texts, audiovisual texts or the everyday interactions of individuals - what Hymes (1974; 1986) calls 'norms of interaction'. As Kramsch (1993a) has pointed out every attempt to communicate with the speaker of another language is a cultural act. What this approach is suggesting is that culture is embodied in the ways in which people interact with each other in everyday forms of talk and through the written texts they produce. That is, culture underlies every part of communication, from asking someone to lend you a pen to writing a novel. It also demonstrates quite clearly that language learners need to have access to the sorts of cultural rules which are used in the sorts of interactions in which they are likely to engage.

The shift of perception in the language/culture nexus has had many implications for the

language teaching profession. Language teachers are now compelled to review the nature of the languages to be taught and also to revise their language pedagogy. Language teaching is being revisited not only in terms of content but also in terms of new types of skills learners need in order to explore culture as it is manifested in language use. Moreover the recognition that culture pervades all aspects of language use has meant that the teaching of culture can no longer be delayed to advanced levels of language learning as was the case in the old paradigm of language instruction (Liddicoat, Crozet, Jansen and Schmidt 1997) Instead, it means that culture needs to be integrated into the teaching of all language skills so that learners can learn to speak but also write in culturally appropriate ways for a myriad of specific purposes.

Culture is multiform and traditional and contemporary approaches to teaching culture - as briefly described above - currently co-exist in many language courses. It is not our purpose in this volume to oppose the old and the new. Rather, we want to present the work in language instruction which we see as taking language pedagogy forward into new areas. The strength of the arguments in all the papers we have selected should speak for themselves and we hope that they will give 'food for thought' for language teachers in their decisions about whether to stick exclusively to traditional approaches in language teaching or to venture into promising new territories.

We wish to stress that, in spite of the constant reassessment of what needs to be taught in the language classroom and how it should be taught, the basic goal of language teaching has not changed. It still is to make language learners into competent communicators in the spoken and written forms of the target language. However, as language teachers have become more and more aware of the importance of teaching culture as part of language use, redefinitions of the meaning of communicative competence have emerged.

Communicative competence is now being redefined in terms of cross-cultural understanding, intercultural and critical communicative competence (Buttjes and Byram 1990; Crozet and Liddicoat 1999; Kramsch 1995; Tickoo 1995; Zarate 1986). One of the key points to the redefinition of communicative competence for language teaching is that more than linguistic forms must be taught to language learners. The new knowledge teachers need to introduce in the language class is what Zarate (1993) has called 'knowing how to relate to otherness'. This is the essence of intercultural competence. 'Relating to otherness' in turn implies that both learners' first and target cultures be put under scrutiny in the language class so as to make visible the differences which can potentially prevent the two cultures from relating successfully. The notion of intercultural competence - as the newly defined goal of language teaching - has therefore removed the exclusive focus on native speaker norms. Instead, language teaching now needs to be seen more in the context of intercultural communication and preparing learners to communicate outside their own cultural boundaries (Bolten 1993, Nagata 1998).

This is where the biggest impact of introducing culture as part of language learning is most felt by language teachers. Teaching the target language has become teaching learners how to make their first culture relate to the target culture in a way which can free them from a monocultural view of the world without making them parrots in a new world. Descartes as early as 1637 had already articulated the kind of gain which can be derived from 'meeting with otherness' the first step towards what we now call intercultural competence:

Il est bon de savoir quelque chose des moeurs de divers peuples, afin de juger des nôtres plus sainement, et que nous ne pensions pas que tout ce qui est contre nos modes soit ridicule, et contre raison, ainsi qu'ont coutume de faire ceux qui n'ont rien vu.

[It is advisable to know something of the customs of various peoples in order to better judge our own and to ensure that we do not think that anything contrary to our own practices is ridiculous and unreasonable, as do those who have never seen anything - Authors' translation]

(Descartes 1637/1972:32)

With regard to the teaching of interculturality, the professional discourse of today's educationalists has not produced statements which are substantially different from Descartes' advice. The problem is not the lack of a consensus about the goals of interculturality but, as always, it is the difficult task of turning ideas and theory into practice.

Language teachers are in this sense in a unique position to contribute to the making of a more intercultural world. However, the task of helping language learners challenge and re-evaluate their built-in stereotypes about other cultures in order to accept the value of another world view is not an easy nor a short term endeavour (Tickoo 1995). Intercultural sensitivity is not an automatic outcome of language learning (McMeniman and Evans 1997). In his chapter, Mangubhai explores the relationship between cultural factors and language attitudes and their impact on language learning. He argues that students have to be encouraged to become bicultural and adopt new patterns of behaviour in order to function in the new environment. He also argues that if cultural issues are not addressed in the classroom, the result may be dissatisfaction with the learning experience or even complete rejection of learning.

Pauwels, in her chapter, develops a wider perspective on the sort of learning that is needed in language and culture teaching by challenging the idea that many intercultural-interlingual encounters are conducted between a native speaker and a non-native speaker and emphasises the importance of the use of a number of languages for communication between speakers who are not native speakers of the language they are using. She argues for a new emphasis in language teaching which can address the complexities of such lingua franca settings. The recognition of lingua franca settings means that the teaching of language and cultures needs to consider new understandings of the 'target' of language teaching and language acquisition. The goals and approaches on language teaching need move beyond a focus on language specific norms and routines to a focus on the processes of language use.

In an intercultural approach to language teaching, the teacher becomes the principal mediator between cultures. S/he has to consider both the learners' own cultural expectations and understandings and at the same time introduce them to a new cultural viewpoint enshrined in the target language (Crozet and Liddicoat 1999). This involves more than learning about the culture of the target language, it involves reflecting on how culture works through language (Liddicoat, Crozet and Lo Bianco 1999). In this sense, the teacher is the principal mediator between cultures who has to consider both the learners' own cultural expectations and understandings and at the same time introduce them to the new cultural view point enshrined in the target language.

In this sense, the new educational challenges placed on language teaching are ambitious and for many language teachers they can often seem almost out of reach. Teaching language from an intercultural perspective implies teaching culture as it is embedded in both the learner's first language and the target language. This is arguably the easiest part of the challenge.

One significant problem for teaching culture in the language classroom is that culture is not as readily describable as decontextualised grammatical rules. However, research in various types of discourse analysis and pragmatics has now shown that it is possible to identify the role of culture in language (see for example Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1993; Moerman 1988; Wierzbicka 1986; 1991) and this work provides interesting insights which can be used in the language classroom.

The most crucial issue for language teachers is therefore not so much that culture in language is not easily accessible but that culture is primarily variable. To make culture visible is one thing to make its variable nature graspable and teachable is another. The complexity involved in this variability can be seen in the work of Boyer, Butzbach and Pendanx (1990) who distinguish three different sources of variability (which they call "diversity") in language use - geographical, sociocultural and circumstantial - which together account for the variability of language use. The appropriateness of choice of a lexical item, gesture, etc. in an interaction can, therefore, depend on the geographical place, socio-economic group and particular circumstances within which the interactants are performing. Culture is not a static, monolithic construct. It is dynamic and both creates and is created by every attempt to communicate. Language teaching has tended to by-pass the problem of variability in language use by often offering learners minimalist versions of the target language. While removing this difficult but essential contextual and cultural component from language might make language easier to teach, the learning outcomes which result are bound to be at the very least incomplete, and the picture of language in use which emerges will be stereotyped, inaccurate and in some cases misleading.

The cultural and linguistic variability of language use can be integrated into language courses if language teachers adopt an approach which is, as eloquently stated by Kramsch:

> ... an approach which is more interested in fault lines than in smooth landscapes, in the recognition of complexity and in the tolerance of ambiguity, not in the search for clear yardsticks of competence or insurances against malpractice.
>
> (Kramsch 1993a:2)

By being prepared to stand along the fault lines of language in use, the authors in this volume offer insights into how language teachers can realise the goals of intercultural competence through language teaching practice. From an enlightened perspective on the nature of language in use which integrates language and the variability of its sociocultural context, they review the teaching of traditional language skills (oral interaction, reading and writing) from two perspectives; the more general approaches to language teaching, and in the context of languages for specific purposes.

## Culture in the spoken language

The review of the teaching of spoken language has largely been influenced by research in discourse analysis. More specifically research in conversation analysis and pragmatics have pointed out to language teachers and researchers in Second Language Acquisition where the nexus language/culture could be found in verbal interaction. This has opened up a new field of enquiry in particular in the study of learners' interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper and Schmidt 1996; Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993). It has also led professionals in language instruction to

review language teaching materials to see what has been missing in the communicative language teaching approach (Hanamura 1998, Kramsch 1987).

The relationship between discourse analysis and language teaching is now well established (Hatch 1992; Kramsch 1981; Peytard and Moirand 1992; Slade and Gardner 1986). Research both in conversation analysis and pragmatics depicts the socio-cultural construct within which all human verbal interaction operate. The socio-cultural construct of spoken language is made up of cultural norms which are like an internal filter into which speakers feed events and ideas for interpretation (Sani 1995). Conversation analysis describes norms of interaction between speakers. That is it describes speakers' organisation of sequences in conversation (Goodwin and Heritage 1990; Heritage 1989) and it has the potential to identify what elements in this organisation are related to culture (Moerman 1988). Pragmatic norms on the other hand are more to do with the expression of speakers' intent in specific speech acts (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Speech acts in turn refer to what people do with language, what sort of actions they perform as a result of doing this. The way a speech act is performed in any given language can be very culture specific (Wierzbicka 1985).

Although the usefulness of discourse analysis to language teaching is now unquestionable, what remains to explore is how research in discourse analysis can translate into language teaching practice. Crozet (1996) has identified seven components for the teaching of verbal interaction and culture: norms of interaction, pragmatic norms, kinesic and prosodic features, spoken grammar, colloquial lexicon and features of pronunciation. These components represent tangible new input for the teaching of spoken language. Barraja-Rohan's chapter has also redefined the nature of spoken language to be taught and offers a methodology to teach conversation, which she has integrated in a new course book for ESL learners. Barraja-Rohan claims that "conversation constitutes the base of all kinds of spoken language interaction", it is complex and involves verbal as well as non-verbal language which is often highly culture specific. She argues that language teachers lack a theoretical framework for identifying what needs to be taught in verbal interaction and this often leads to their equating the teaching of spoken language to "making students talk".

Barraja-Rohan also singles out an issue common to all articles in this volume when she speaks of the need to expose learners to authentic texts to ensure that the knowledge learners acquire in the language classroom is directly transferable to the real world. The methodology she offers has definite instructional as well as educative goals. Her work is highly innovative in that it positions every day talk as representing a form of language use which has a high cultural content and a unique socio-linguistic structure. Furthermore Barraja-Rohan clearly shows how the introduction of an intercultural perspective in the teaching of spoken language calls for a new language pedagogy.

Liddicoat in his article argues that the communicative approach to language teaching has failed in that it did not make explicit the socio-cultural constructs which lay beneath language use. Hence it has deprived learners of the cultural rules they need to know to perform verbally in culturally appropriate ways in the target language. Liddicoat questions the cultural appropriateness of the content of language textbooks looking at two specific examples of conversation openings and closings as teaching items. Openings and closings in conversation contain ceremonial utterances which can contain a great deal of cultural variation. Simple language can contain important cultural information and the failure to present and acknowledge

this information in textbooks can make culture invisible to learners.

Kerbrat-Orrechioni (1993) has distinguished basic possibilities for the mapping of ceremonial utterances in a cross-cultural context.

First, there may be complete congruence in the use of such utterances. One example of this may be answering the telephone. In any culture use of a telephone requires a person to pick up the telephone and establish the talk. Languages have a range of forms which cover this event (see Table 1).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| English | ((ring)) | *hello* |
| French | ((ring)) | *allo* |
| Italian | ((ring)) | *pronto* |
| Spanish | ((ring)) | *dígame* |
| Japanese | ((ring)) | *moshimoshi* |
| Chinese | ((ring)) | *wèi* |

**Table 1:** Common formulae for answering the telephone

What can be seen here is that each of the languages mentioned has a common formula for opening a telephone conversation. This formulaic utterance seems to be a universal feature because it is a necessary pre-condition of telephone talk that a channel for communication be established (Liddicoat 1995). However, even with something as basic as this there is in fact a great deal of cultural variation in the way in which a ceremonial is realised. For example only the English utterance is the same as a greeting token, while the rest are not. Chinese *wei* functions as an attention-getting device - that is, a summons, much like Japanese *moshimoshi*. Also in some cultures, such as Japanese, it is possible for the caller to speak first rather than the answerer (Kumatoridani 1992).

We can see similar differences happening across cultures with greetings. For example, greetings are commonly realised in different ways according to the ways in which the day is divided or degrees of formality. English has a common greeting token *hello* which can be used at any time of day, while French and Italian have two different tokens *bonjour - bonsoir* and *buongiorno - buona sera* which are specified for daytime versus evening (although there are differences in when evening is deemed to begin) and Spanish *buenos días - buenas tardes* divides the day into morning and afternoon. The English equivalents have a three way division, *good morning - good afternoon - good evening*, but these are marked for a higher level of formality than their equivalents in French, Spanish and Italian. Indonesian employs a more complex pattern dividing the day into a larger number of parts: *selamat pagi* (morning) - *selamat siang* (midday - 11.00 am - 1.00 pm) - *selamat soré* (afternoon) - *selamat malam* (evening/night). Awa Pit, an indigenous language of Colombia divides greetings according to time of day and also the weather. Henriksen and Obando (1985) give nine morning greetings, including *wat kintite* (it dawned well), *kwail kintite* (it dawned badly), *alu kintite* (it dawned raining), and four greetings for afternoon: for example, *pal nashtui* (good afternoon), *alu nashtui* (rainy afternoon), *inkwa nashtui* (windy afternoon).

In greetings and telephone openings; we can see that even very simple aspects of language in use such as greetings are highly subject to variation across languages and cultures. As such, surface similarities in functions can mask deeper differences in the ways in which interaction, at the linguistic level, and the division of time, at the conceptual level, are constructed.

Second, a ritual utterance may exist in one culture/language but may be unknown in the culture of the other language. In some cases this is because the event does not exist in both societies, for example greetings for specific cultural events which are not shared by the two societies. However, in many cases the actual context in which a ritual is used exists in both societies, but the context is not considered a ritual context in one of the societies.

A good example of this is the use of ceremonial utterances before eating. There is no formula used in English at the beginning of the meal, but these are very common in other languages (see Table 2).

| Language | Formula | Approximate English Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| French | *bon appétit* | 'good appetite' |
| Italian | *buon apetito* | 'good appetite' |
| German | *guten Appetit* | 'good appetite' |
| Hokkien | *(āyí) chība* | '(aunt,) eat' |
| Spanish | *buen provecho* | 'good benefit' |
| Russian | *kušajte (na zdorovje)* | 'eat (to your benefit)' |

**Table 2:** Some formulae for beginning meals

The existence of such formulae for beginning meals demonstrates an interesting aspect of meal times in the social and cultural lives of the people who use them. In Australian society, eating is considered to be a regular and necessary activity. Meals are not really occasions, although they can be made into a social event and many social events do involve eating. While a meal of course has a recognisable starting point in Australia, we do not have a ceremonial social means to mark the starting of the meal. However, in French social life food and meals have a different social and cultural value. Food and eating is central to French culture and many traditions in France value food very highly. Eating is fundamentally a social event and an event to be shared with others. As such *bon appétit* marks the mutual beginning of the social event of eating.

If we compare the French *bon appétit* with the Singapore Hokkien Chinese *(āyí) chība* we can also see that there are some cultural difference in the ways in which the formulae are used. In Hokkien, these before meal formulae are used with older relatives, parents of friends, friends of parents and less commonly with parents and older siblings. As such, it is typically the youngest family member who performs the formula, and effectively invites older people to begin eating first (Kuiper and Lin 1989). This rather simple ritual shows something very important about the hierarchical organisation of Chinese society and the respect for age which

is embodied in the society. As such a very simple ritual in a very familiar situation reveals an enormous amount about the culture which underlies the ritual.

These formulae seem also to be related to different ways of serving food at a meal. In Australia it is typical to have your meal served to you on your plate and for each person to have a plate of food. In other cultures, it is more usual for food to be served and for each diner to help him/herself. In this context of shared food there is obviously a social need to mark the beginning of the meal which is more important than if food is served individually. The Russian expression *kušajte (na zdorovje)* is usually said by the person who cooks the food. This person, however, serves the food communally but does not typically eat with the rest of the people (Michael Dunn personal communication).

Third, the ritual may exist in both societies but may be realised in different ways. A simple example of this can be seen in thanking behaviour. Different societies thank in different contexts and some things which may require thanks in one culture may not require thanks in another. Thanking is actually much more complex, however, than just knowing when to say 'thank-you'. In English we tend to conceive of thanking as a single activity. However, when we compare English with a language like Japanese we can see that there is no real equivalent of the English thank-you. Instead we have two types of activity, *arigatoo* and *sumimasen*, both of which resemble our notion of thanking. The socio-cultural basis of these two words is quite complex. *Sumimasen* is actually a form of apology and in speaking Japanese it is often more appropriate to offer an apology rather than thanking someone, particularly in response to a favour (Wierzbicka 1991).

The fourth possibility is that the ritual exists in both societies and is realised by similar formulae but these formulae do not have the same value or they are not used in the same conditions. For example, English and French both have identical formulaic expressions *oh good* and *ah bon* which can be used to acknowledge someone else's utterance. However, while the forms of the utterances are identical the value which each form has is not identical, as can be seen in:

A: *ma mère s'est casée la jambe*

B: *ah bon?*

A: my mother has broken her leg.

B: oh good

In French *ah bon* is simply an acknowledgment which shows that you have heard what the other person said, that it is new information for you and that you are interested. It topicalises the utterances rather than adopting a stance towards the utterance (Crozet and Liddicoat 1998). In English, the equivalent expression is an assessment - it indicates the hearer's attitude to the information and as such it is incompatible with 'bad news'.

The final possibility is that identical lexical forms could have a ritual function in one culture, but not in the other. We can see this quite clearly with a comparison of Australian English and French versions of the question 'Did you have a good weekend?' In Australian English this is a ritual question which you can ask anyone on Monday morning and it receives

a ritual response such as 'not bad'. In French, however, this question is a genuine information question which you normally only ask people you know well and if you genuinely want to know about their weekend. It usually receives a long and detailed answer and a response such as 'not bad' would be considered evasive or unfriendly (Béal 1992).

As we can see, even very simple language offers genuine opportunities for cultural understanding in the language classroom. In fact, it is often this very simple formulaic language which is most culturally loaded. As such, cultural knowledge is an important part of oral interaction and even very basic oral interaction is a cultural act with cultural implications.

## Culture in the written language

The written language has traditionally been seen as the repository of culture. But writing is not simply a matter of encoding cultural content into a text, it is also a culturally bound activity in terms of its goals and its execution. Reading and writing are cultural acts in just the same way that speaking and listening are. Reading and writing are therefore occasions for the learner to participate in the culture.

The effect of culture on the written language can be seen at a number of different levels. Culture can be seen in the material which is encoded in the text. Kramsch and Nolden (1994) have argued that reading in a foreign language involves "shaping the contours of the cultural gaps in meaning and relocating them if necessary" (Kramsch and Nolden 1994:34). The foreign language learner is thus placed in a position of decoding and investigating the cultural content of the text as an integral part of the activity of reading, and by implication is producing similar behaviours in the context of foreign language writing. In fact, the cultural content of a text can make it difficult to decode, even where the language is familiar. Reading is a process where background knowledge is constantly called into play in order to understand texts and the background knowledge a reader brings to a text and the background knowledge a writer assumes that a reader brings to a text are cultural constructs.

Written texts contain powerful cultural messages and Ho's chapter gives an interesting insight into the ways in which socialisation can be carried out in conjunction with the acquisition of literacy in a first language. Ho argues that the content of instructional texts for learning to read Chinese introduces the learner to central values of Chinese culture in an essentially covert way. The decoding of text becomes the assimilation of culture. While Ho is primarily concerned with cultural transmission in learning literacy in the first language, her article also gives interesting insights into some of the complexities confronting the second language reader in trying to access these children's texts. We can see that even simple texts are repositories of cultural ideals and practices and the language learner needs to access the cultural underpinnings of the texts as much as s/he needs to access the language which encodes them. Ho's Chinese learners are being socialised into practices of Chinese society through their reading of texts.

For the second language reader, there is the added possibility of becoming involved in oppositional practice (Kramsch and Nolden 1994) where the values and assumptions of the first culture and the second culture can be mutually interrogated and deconstructed. Culture can be accessed through the text, but the mismatches between the incoming culture and the existing culture provide opportunities for insight and understanding. From such a starting point, Maurer, Hillman and Carroli present a rethinking of the teaching of literature in the

language curriculum. Starting with the idea that literature is fundamentally cultural, they explore ways of teaching literature in an intercultural perspective. A central step in doing this is breaking down the divide between languages and cultures. Rather than teaching, for example, French literature in a French language program, they propose an approach for teaching literature across language and cultures as well as within languages and cultures. Their approach moves away from comparative literature models to develop a truly intercultural perspective. The approach involves, not so much the study of literary texts, but the study of readings of texts. Cultures become filters through which literature can be read and understood, each contributing its own reading. The oppositional practice involved is not just the students' culture meeting the authors' culture, but also these two meeting other cultures. The end result is a rich, multifaceted reading which negotiates between these perspectives.

Culture does not, however, lie only in the content of texts. It can also be seen in the form which the text takes. This idea has been a central part of contrastive rhetoric since the early work in this area (Kaplan 1966). In many discussions of the relationship between culture and writing, however, culture tends to be seen as monolithic and there is an assumption that people who are writing within a culture are encoding this monolithic culture (eg. Clyne 1987, Kaplan 1966). Thus, French writers encode French culture, American writers encode American culture and so on. This is not, however, a useful model within which to look at texts which are produced in a cultural context because linguistic uniformity does not mean cultural uniformity. Culture is instantiated in different ways by different individuals and different groups under the common cultural umbrella (Liddicoat 1997a). The particular features of a text can be influenced by a range of factors, including the personal preferences of the author, the expectations of the community of readers and the subject matter (Liddicoat 1997b, Safnil 2000).

The cultural variability in text structuring can be seen in a number of simple examples. In Chinese letters of request, the reason for the request commonly precedes the request itself, while in English the reverse order is typical (Kirkpatrick 1993a; Kirkpatrick 1993b). Varying the order of items within a text in either language creates an effect, which in turn has consequences for the perception of the text. Thus, the Chinese order used in English appears rambling or unordered, while the English order in Chinese may appear abrupt (Zhu Yunxia, personal communication).

The area of contrastive rhetoric has been a problematic one and some work in the area has been beset by culturally-biased assumptions and by methodological inadequacies. Kirkpatrick's contribution provides a set of guidelines for work in the area of contrastive rhetoric which enable the teachers (and the learners) to determine the differences in cultural practice in the construction of texts. These guidelines are important key elements for the teaching of the practice of writing culturally appropriate texts in the target language in terms of text structures.

## Culture and Languages for specific purposes

Languages for specific purposes (LSP) have not usually been considered as areas in which culture is particularly relevant. In fact, early approaches to LSP have consistently ignored elements of language which have not been seen to be directly associated with the particular discipline area under discussion (Widdowson 1983). As a result, many syllabuses for LSP have not included much beyond a narrow description of the language structures and functions

involved in the discipline (Munby 1978) and many discussions of LSP have not gone much beyond identifying specialist vocabulary (eg. Fossat and Maurand 1976; Kočourek 1981, Phal 1971). Widdowson (1983) has argued against too narrow a view of what constitutes language in the LSP context, but cultural dimensions have still not been emphasised to a large degree.

LSP is, however, highly culturally contexted, both within the culture of the discipline itself and also in the more general culture of the speech community (Liddicoat 1997b). The papers by Schmidt and by Cowley and Hanna have each addressed the issue of the place of culture in LSP. Schmidt indicates the sorts of cultural knowledge needed by qualified nurses receiving language training in Germany and argues that the hospital is not a culturally neutral environment, but rather that nurses need information about German hospital culture in order to be able to function effectively in this environment. Cowley and Hanna emphasise the problematic nature of the multiple levels of culture in action in a French for Business classroom, indicating that aspects of the target language culture, of the business culture and of the classroom culture are all present and potentially competing.

These chapters indicate the desirability of further investigation of the role of culture in LSP and interactions between culture and language within all language teaching contexts. They make the point clearly that there is no language use without culture and that culture is central to communication. They also open a new dimension which involves the interaction of a professional culture and a general culture, both of which may be unfamiliar to the language learner. This unfamiliarity with the professional culture may stem from either a lack of prior exposure to the professional culture, as seems to be the case with Cowley and Hanna's business students, or from different understandings of the professional culture in different societies, as in the case of Schmidt's nurses. These studies both point to the multiple complexities of language and culture involved in professional contexts and challenge the more decontextualised approaches to language teaching sometimes used for teaching languages for professional purposes.

## Culture and language teachers' professional development

The teaching of culture as an inseparable part of language, as it has been presented in its different forms in our discussion so far, has implications for the pre-service and in-service development of language teachers. It also urges us to reconsider the role of language teaching within multicultural societies and as part of multicultural rhetoric and politics (Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco 1999). An intercultural approach to language teaching aims to support an active participation in multicultural societies where speakers of 'other' languages know how to embrace (rather than simply enjoy or reject) cultural difference for enhanced inter-cultural enrichment and societal harmony. As a result, a re-evaluation of the approach and content of language teachers' professional development is essential in supporting the implementation of ILT.

As teaching culture in language involves reflection on one's first culture and learning about an 'other' culture there is ample scope for the language teacher to view professional development in her/his field as personal development as well. The language teacher, as "culture-and-language" teacher, also has the potential political role of contributing to positive interethnic

relations. Papademetre in his chapter offers a process for rethinking the foundations of language teachers' professional development. He suggests that the education of the culture-and-language teacher be conceived as a journey of discovery, personal development and cross-cultural and linguistic engagement. He further argues for the integration of linguistic and applied linguistic content into language-and-culture teacher training. Papademetre also opens up an overdue debate by rightly asking, "who dominates and controls the discourse on language-and-culture teacher education?". The gap between linguistic/language knowledge and language teaching theory/practice more than ever needs to be bridged in terms which can benefit professionals in both fields and of both fields.

## Conclusion

The picture which emerges strongly in this volume is that culture is fundamental in all aspects of language use and as such it merits centrality in all aspects of language teaching. Therefore, as language teachers we must acknowledge the inextricable link between language and culture in the language classroom. It is impossible to use language without creating a context and without creating social relationships through the use of language. Cultural understandings are, therefore, the basic underpinnings of communication. Even in situations where a language is used as a *lingua franca* between non-native speakers, these speakers are engaged in developing a social context in which cultural values are being enacted. Wherever a language is used by non-native speakers, speakers are involved in intercultural contexts and require strategies for interpreting culture and language as they communicate. As such, cultural issues can never be relegated to the position of an additional component in language teaching, but must be acknowledged in any language teaching activity.

Culture is also found in the more interactional levels of language where speakers create relationships and social contexts through language, as well as at the higher levels of texts. Culture is the basis of both the micro-level organisation of language and society and the macro-level. Culture does not simply determine what information is conveyed but also how information is conveyed and how it is accepted, rejected or otherwise acted on. In fact, it is the micro-level of social interaction which functions to create the macro-level, and social structures can be seen as being built from the sum total of interactions between the members of a social group (Schegloff 1987). The socially constructed nature of the world can, therefore, be seen to be created through socially constructed moments of interaction.

By exposing the learner to new possibilities for understanding the socially constructed nature of the world, the learning of a new language offers opportunities to learn about one's own culture as well as learning about the target culture. One's own cultural assumptions tend to be invisible and unanalysed (Liddicoat, Crozet, Jansen and Schmidt 1997). The first steps towards understanding a new culture must be to acknowledge that culture is relative and to begin to understand how one's own culture affects one's thoughts, actions and words. It is through a process of intertextual comparison between cultures that new cultures can be grasped and understood. Through the same processes one's own culture is thrown more clearly into relief and is made available for analysis (Kramsch 1993a, 1993b, Kramsch and Nolden 1994).

In order to be able to come to terms with a new culture, learners need a metaknowledge - a discourse about culture - which can be used to describe and reflect on events. When learners

can reflect on cultural differences, they have the potential to guide their own learning and to continue their learning independently of classroom and teachers (Byram and Zarate 1994). Given the volume of cultural knowledge which the learner is likely to require in communicating with native speakers and the dynamism inherent in culture itself, it is impossible for the language teacher to teach it all. Consequently, it is vital that learners have strategies which they can apply to further their own learning and to interpret cultural acts in the context in which they occur, not just some information about target language cultural practices. Culture, therefore, needs to be taught as a process, which is subject to change, as a static artefact of some particular social group.

As such, it needs to be acknowledged that culture has to be taught explicitly - it is not simply assimilated by learners (Kramsch 1993b). This is especially the case in foreign language contexts where learners do not have access to a native speaker community. Culture can only be acquired once attention has been drawn to cultural differences. Without some form of cultural teaching, it is possible that this may never happen. Insight into culture needs to be developed, it cannot be assumed. It is too late to wait until the learner gains a high level of proficiency or visits a country where the language is spoken. A learner who knows some of the language but none of the culture risks being fluent but socially incompetent in any attempt to communicate with native speakers. Students need to know how to use the language for communication, not just how to produce acceptable sentences in the language. In addition, useful cultural knowledge is not a set of descriptive facts about the ways in which native speakers behave, it needs to be experienced and practised before it can be deployed.

In all this, it needs to be remembered that the focus of culture teaching needs to be on creating an intercultural space for the learner. The appropriate norm is, therefore, not the native speaker, but rather is a bilingual position. Every individual has a personality, a self-image and an identity which have been developed in their first language context and these need to be respected and accepted in language learning. The learner cannot be expected to abandon or deny the self in order to embrace the other. The aim of language teaching is not to assimilate learners into the native-speaker community, but rather to encourage them to adopt a position in which they are comfortable in dealing with native speakers and are able to achieve their personal and communicative goals.

Once the need to teach culture as an integrated part of language use has been acknowledged at the level of theory as a central aspect of language teaching, there are important consequences for practice. The following factors appear to us to be the most important:

1. Culture has to be integrated into the language classroom from the very first day of language learning. We do not wish to emphasise just the early start to culture learning, but also its integration. Culture must be taught in conjunction with language, not as an adjunct. Along with Kramsch (1991) we are not arguing for culture teaching alongside language teaching but culture teaching which is indistinguishable from language teaching.
2. There is a need to develop new materials for language teaching. It is most important to produce materials which enable the learner to gain exposure to the target culture and to have opportunities to reflect on her/his own culture. Many foreign language text books have adopted a perspective which emphasises the culture of the learner over that of the target community (Kramsch 1987) and these text books are actually an impediment to the integration of language and culture.

3. There is a need to bring a cross-cultural perspective into the teaching of what has been, and still is, adjunct cultural content, such as literature. Approaches which focus solely on the literary merits or historical importance of texts miss opportunities to introduce learners to more significant cultural issues. Kramsch and Nolden (1994), using the concept of oppositional practice, introduce an approach which allows texts to function in a multidimensional way in order to enrich the overall experience of language learning and expand the horizons of second language literacy.
4. There is also a need for teacher training to integrate cultural perspectives into language pedagogy as a basic part of language teaching method. The integration of culture into the language curriculum means a rethinking of the whole process of language teaching. We can no more expect teachers to assimilate this than we can expect learners to assimilate culture.
5. There is a need for more research which describes the ways in which language is used in different cultures. This research is vital to support language teachers. Many teachers who are not native speakers have had little exposure to the cultures of the languages they are teaching and may be unaware of even quite critical differences between their students' first culture and the target culture. Similarly, many native-speaker teachers have not had to analyse their own cultures to the extent necessary for them to know what non-native speakers may need to learn. This is an area in which intuitions are not always adequate or correct.
6. There is also a need for research which will help us to understand how a second culture is acquired and how an intercultural space is created by learners. These elements have been typically neglected in second language acquisition.

Seeing culture as integrated at all levels of language is a new paradigm in language teaching (Liddicoat, Crozet, Jansen and Schmidt 1997) and is currently far from being the dominant view professed by language teachers.

The goals of teaching culture in language (or ILT) are really threefold. First, ILT involves learning about cultures, second, comparing cultures, and third, exploring cultures (Crozet & Liddicoat 1999). Learning about culture in language use is not simply a question of learning where and how language can interact with culture. Learning about cultures implies understanding culture as a process and "a maker of reality/worldview". While the key learning experience in comparing cultures involves recognising how one's own ethnicity is a valid but ultimately arbitrary construct, it is also learning how to reconstruct and appreciate an 'other' worldview (Crozet, Liddicoat and Lo Bianco 1999). Intercultural exploration is the defining of what we have called earlier a third place or third places, that is the place(s) one negotiates for oneself between two or more cultures, a place from which one can comfortably relate and be among difference at large.

An approach to language teaching which implements the teaching of language as culture represents a paradigm shift in the language teaching profession. This approach is gaining impetus as the internationalisation and globalisation of communication make their impact on the ways in which foreign language use is perceived. The paradigm shift which language teaching currently faces promises to be as wide-ranging as was the shift to communicative language teaching. Moving towards an intercultural approach in language teaching fulfils one of the higher potentials of education - to expand learners' horizons and to prepare them to participate in a multilingual and multicultural world.

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# Globalisation and the impact of teaching languages in Australia

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## Introduction: Intercultural encounters as a defining feature of global citizenship

The 20th century and the 21st century can undeniably be characterised as the era of globalisation affecting a growing number of citizens in their daily activities. The rapid advances in technology and especially in telecommunication systems have facilitated the transportation of data across the globe, often reaching their destination in a matter of seconds. In fact, the meteoric rise in telecommunications has brought the world into most people's homes through radio, television, telephone and Internet access. Many of us have become daily participants in, or observers of, events and happenings all over the world and we are brought into contact with a diverse range of cultures and languages. This is the so-called 'global village' phenomenon.

Furthermore improved transportation systems have led to an exponential growth in people movements across the globe. A vast number of people now travel regularly great distances in the context of employment, business, tourism, education, entertainment, sport, etc. These trends in globalisation are also having a direct or indirect impact on communication and communication practices. For example, I believe that the increased globalisation, internationalisation as well as 'technologisation' of employment have changed the nature of many work places and work practices with much more emphasis being placed on effective communication, indeed literacy skills. For example, Fairclough (1985) speaks of the increased 'linguicisation' of modern day societies in which people are expected to be familiar with a vast range of complex communication routines and discourse practices in order to access services and participate in employment and education.

Advanced and diversified language and literacy skills have become a central component of life in a postmodern society or in a community affected by globalisation. Furthermore I would posit that this globalising trend has an impact on how we communicate with each other and with whom we communicate. For example, the increased use of teleconferencing, videoconferencing, of email for inter- and intra-organisational communication, the increased participation in on-line discussions etc., are all having an impact on communication routines and practices and on literacy requirements. The nature and structure of a discussion conducted on-line may be quite different from a face-to-face discussion. Turn-taking procedures are

affected in tele- and videoconferencing. In terms of the interactants (i.e. with whom we communicate), globalisation has led to a substantial increase in intercultural encounters. It is not unusual for employees of multinational companies to be spending a good part of their working day interacting with people across the globe, either on-line or in face-to-face situations. Many more societies around the world have become multicultural and multilingual in their make-up as a result of increased temporary or permanent voluntary or forced migration movements, new alliances and economic and political developments. Consequently, many peoples' daily lives are made up of a series of intercultural encounters, i.e. people of different cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds are interacting with each other. These intercultural encounters are often also interlingual encounters in the following sense:

- the language of the encounter is the L1 (native language) of one party. The other party accommodates to the L1 of that party. Example: A Vietnamese speaker accommodating to a French speaker by switching to French
- the language of the encounter is a lingua franca for both parties, with neither party having an L1 claim on the chosen language. Example: a Chinese speaker and a Spanish speaker both using English to interact with each other
- the parties communicate through their own language with the assistance of an interpreter. Example: a Russian-speaking diplomat interacting with a German-speaking diplomat through the medium of an interpreter
- the parties communicate through their own language as both have enough (linguistic) knowledge of the other language to understand the interaction. This is especially true for closely related languages. Example: A Danish and a Swedish speaker interacting with each other through their respective languages.

There are many more variations on these types of interlingual encounters which could affect the nature of the interaction. For example, does the encounter take place in a community which has one of the speakers' languages as its dominant code? However, for the purpose of this paper the four categories of interlingual encounters suffice to illustrate the point.

Given the increase in intercultural encounters which are also often interlingual encounters, communicating through another language and communicating with people who do not share the same linguistic and/or cultural codes have become much more regular events for an increasing number of people. As a result the learning of another language has gained in significance: more people participate in intercultural encounters, therefore more people need to develop skills in another language in order to go about their daily 'business'. Although it is difficult to ascertain how many people have or are engaged in the study of a second or foreign language as there are no reliable estimates available, there is a belief that language learning has increased substantially in the latter half of this century. There is no denial that English is the most dominant second or foreign language being learned. Crystal (1997) estimates that there are approximately 235 million second language speakers of English and that between 1200 and 1500 million people are speakers of English as a foreign language (possibly far more learners).

This dominance of English in the second and foreign language learning stakes is of course linked to the emergence of English as a global language (e.g. Crystal 1997, Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992). This also means that English is frequently used as the lingua franca in intercultural encounters. Indeed English is often the medium of communication between a

variety of people who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore these encounters take place in a variety of 'cultural' settings which have often no immediate link to either culture(s) associated with the languages of the speakers or the medium of communication. An example of this would be the business interaction in English between an Arab speaker from Egypt with a Japanese speaker in a hotel conference room in Indonesia. I believe that this type of interlingual - intercultural encounter, illustrated in this example, is increasing rapidly and poses challenges to the learning of other languages. This is especially, though not exclusively, the case for the learning of languages which feature regularly as linguae franche (e.g. English). The increase in these types of encounters confronts the foreign/second language learner and teacher with the need to focus and reflect more explicitly on the relationship between culture and language.

## Culture in language teaching and learning

Although there has (always) been either an implicit or explicit acknowledgement in past and some current forms of foreign or second language teaching about the close link between language and culture this link, until recently, has seldom been the focus of serious scholarly attention. Fortunately the tide has turned and there are now many substantial contributions to this topic (e.g. Bex 1994, Buttjes & Byram 1991, Byram 1988, Byram et al. 1991, Kelz 1993, Kramsch 1993, Liddicoat & Crozet 1997, McMeniman & Evans 1997, Murphy 1988, Savignon & Damien 1987). Many of these contributions stress the importance of going beyond a tokenistic approach to incorporate culture into language teaching, i.e. beyond 'the four skills plus culture' approach (Kramsch 1993: 8) which has characterised and continues to characterise the treatment of culture in many forms of language teaching.

Although I believe that many of these contributions have advanced the study of culture in language learning, there is a need to assess these in the context of the increase in and changes of intercultural settings. As previously mentioned, many intercultural-interlingual encounters are not so much a question of scenarios along the lines of 'foreign/second language speakers trying to accommodate linguistically and culturally to native speakers of the foreign/second language being learned' than of 'foreign/second language speakers trying to interact appropriately (both in a linguistic and cultural sense) with other foreign/second language speakers' - the lingua franca scenario. Such encounters present complex configurations of culturally and linguistically different competencies and values rather than a confluence of native and non-native linguistic and cultural competencies. I see it as an important role for language professionals to assess to what extent the current language teaching and learning practices are attuned to dealing with this new communicative environment.

## Language teaching practices for intercultural settings

In this paper I want to discuss to what extent current language teaching and learning practices prepare students to operate in intercultural settings of the lingua franca type. My focus will be primarily on language teaching and learning practices in Australian schools and universities as I am most familiar with this environment for language learning. In particular my focus will be on how culture is being treated in the language classroom and to what extent intercultural scenarios feature in these classes.

## What is culture?

Fundamental to a discussion about the place of culture in language learning is an understanding of the concept of culture. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the complexity of the concept of culture and its definition. For the purpose of this paper I will resort to a short description of the concept which does reflect differences and commonalities amongst scholars of 'culture' (including anthropologists, sociologists, cultural studies specialists, as well as behaviourist and cognitive approaches to culture). Culture is a concept referring to ways of acting, believing, valuing and thinking which are shared by members of a community (social group) and which are transmitted to the next generation. A culture is dynamic and open to change as a result of a change in living conditions or through contact with other cultures (see also Pauwels, Eades and Harkins 1998).

## Culture in the language classroom

In the history of 'foreign /community language' learning in Australia the following teaching approaches have dominated: in chronological order, these are the grammar-based approach, the audio-lingual/audio-visual approach, the functional-notional approach and a communicative approach. Of course not all languages taught in Australia have been exposed to or affected by each of these approaches and despite the 'popularity' and preference for a communicative approach to language learning, not all forms of LOTE (Languages Other Than English) or ESL (English as a Second Language) teaching adopt a communicative approach.

During the period when a grammar-based approach was the rule rather than the exception, culture featured in a significant way in the language classroom, although it was seldom integrated in the language learning process. In fact it was 'Culture' - high culture or culture with a Capital C - which was taught. Murphy (1988) refers to this as the civilisation approach in which the emphasis was on the presentation of a series of cultural facts. Initially the main focus for this cultural exposé was the presentation of literary facts: novels, plays, poems etc, later other aspects such as knowledge about 'social institutions, current events, television etc. '(Crozet & Liddicoat 1997:20) were added. This fitted well with the expected audience for foreign language learning, -at least in many English-speaking communities-, i.e. academically gifted students with a strong interest in the humanities. The acquisition of foreign language skills was seen in terms of gaining a capacity for linguistic analysis (through the formal study of grammatical aspects), and of gaining access to the icons and highlights of the Culture associated with that language. Also problematic in this treatment of culture in the language classroom was the coalescing of the concepts of language, nation and culture, e.g. "French is the language of France and French culture is found in France and is expressed through French". Any scenario deviating from that, e.g. the discussion of French as spoken in Canada, or a French-Canadian play, would be relegated to the 'exotic' or be ignored altogether.

Both Murphy (1988) and McMeniman & Evans (1997) characterise the audio-visual/ audio-lingual approach as one in which the explicit treatment of culture vanished. The primary, if not sole focus of the language learning activities was on forming habits and instilling routines in order to attain linguistic competence. Although the functional-notional approach set the scene for the communicative approach by focussing more on the uses of language than on the linguistic elements that make up the language system (grammar-based approach) or than on linguistic habit formation, its focus on culture was still largely of a meta-nature [talking about

cultural practices]. The 'advance' was seen to lie in a movement towards a broader understanding of the concept of culture, i.e. ways of behaving associated with the community whose language is being studied.

With the advent of communicative language teaching in Australia 'communication in context' became the focus of language teaching and learning. The communicative approach foregrounds the importance of communicative competence - i.e. language in use. It stresses the need to use language which is not only linguistically but also culturally and communicatively appropriate according to context. A communicative approach has the potential more than the other approaches to integrate culture into language practice, i.e. to expose 'the cultural basis of the ways in which people communicate' Crozet & Liddicoat (1997:2). Crozet & Liddicoat (1997: 2) also argue that with 'the recognition that culture pervades all aspects of language use ... the teaching of culture can no longer be delayed to advanced levels of language learning'. In a communicative approach students need to be made aware of sociolinguistic, pragmatic and sociocultural rules or aspects governing communication in the target language.

I believe alongside others (e.g. Kramsch 1993, Crozet & Liddicoat 1997, Byram & Zarate 1994) that this cultural knowledge embedded in language needs to be made explicit. With limited access to or immersion into real life situations, it is difficult to acquire this dimension 'naturally'. Although there is some doubt about the extent to which teachers advocating a communicative approach actually integrate culture in this way or make explicit the cultural dimension of communicative competence, there is nevertheless an increased awareness amongst the Australian teaching profession that it should be done. For example, the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment recognised the need for guidance on this matter when it commissioned the report 'Development of sociocultural understandings through the study of languages' (Pauwels, Eades and Harkins 1998). This guide assists teachers in recognising the cultural dimensions of language use as embedded in the linguistic structures, communication routines as well as discourse rules of the target language. It also provides some guidance on how to teach the sociocultural dimensions of language use appropriate to the level of proficiency and maturity of the learners.

Another dimension to this focus on culture through language learning is a critical examination of the cultural appropriateness of teaching materials used in communicative language teaching. Kramsch (1987, 1993) and Liddicoat (1997: 56) point the finger at the many textbooks which ' while focusing on communicatively important language functions, present those functions within a cultural context which is often the culture of the learner, and in many cases within the school or university culture of the learner'. Such textbooks often provide little input to learners of how language is actually used by native speakers. Textbooks written by target language speakers associated with or residing in the target speech community often fail to make the cultural dimensions of language use explicit.

As stated above, I believe that many of these contributions and examinations of culture in language teaching have advanced significantly the study of culture in language learning and that they are starting to have an impact on classroom practice. Nevertheless these contributions often continue implicitly to view the primary goal of language learning in terms of being able to operate in interlingual encounters of the type - foreign language learner interacting with native speaker. In other words, there is, at least in relation to LOTE teaching, an assumption that learning is oriented towards communication with someone who is linguistically, culturally

and communicatively 'competent' in the target language. Furthermore, few contributions problematise the notion of the 'native speaker'. Currently this native speaker is often 'idealised' in language learning contexts: he or she (this aspect has changed a bit!) is generally a speaker of the standard language and very often a core member of the speech community. By core member I mean that the speaker is a member of that part of the speech community which sets the norms or is believed to set the norms. For example, most representations of native speakers of German happen to be citizens of Germany rather than of Austria, German-speaking Switzerland, Luxembourg, or other German-speaking areas. Few textbooks for French, with the possible exception of those in or from Canada, feature native speakers who are French-speaking Caledonians, Quebeqois , etc. The latter members of the target speech community do feature but seldom as role models. Where they do, their sociocultural and communicative competence has often been standardised to be in line with that of a core member reinforcing a homogenous linguistic and cultural view of the target speech community.

The pluricentricity of popular 'foreign' languages such as English, German, Spanish, Chinese is seldom recognised, let alone made explicit in language learning materials. These issues present less of a problem in teaching approaches where the emphasis is not on communication and interaction than for those which stress the communicative nature of language learning. Given the vast wealth of research literature examining cultural and interactive norms in pluricentric languages , there is a task ahead for applied linguists in collaboration with language teachers to review these findings in relation to their relevance for the language classroom.

In addition I would like to argue that language learning needs to become more cognisant of the lingua franca- type of encounter. As stated previously this type of interlingual encounter will become more widespread as a result of globalisation. There is no doubt that this is already the case for English but it will not remain restricted to English but will also affect languages like Spanish, French, German, possibly Chinese and Arabic. The use of a second or foreign language in such interlingual encounters presents challenges to language learning, especially in relation to the teaching of cultural norms and communication routines. Whereas the linguistic features of intercultural encounters involving a lingua franca may not vary greatly from encounters between a foreign language learner and a native speaker of the target language, the communicative practices and rules which embed cultural norms and values may be quite different. This has been demonstrated convincingly in research on cross- and intercultural communication involving a lingua franca (e.g. Clyne 1994, Meeuwis 1994, Pauwels 1994, 1995). Such research has also revealed that the sociocultural and sociopragmatic aspects of communication are the more likely causes for intercultural and cross-cultural miscommunication and communication breakdown.

## Implications for language teaching

It is not my belief that an increased focus on lingua franca-type encounters in the context of language learning will need to lead to a dramatic change in teaching practices which advocate and support an integrative approach to the teaching of culture in the language classroom (see section 'culture in the classroom'). However, the focus on such encounters in the language classroom does emphasise the need to make the socio-cultural, sociolinguistic and socio-

pragmatic aspects of language use explicit in teaching so that students gain an awareness of the complexity in the relationship between language, communication routines, culture and context. For example, students need to be aware of the cultural specificity in the linguistic expression of politeness. They need to understand the functions and cultural significance of greetings, forms of address and other naming practices. An understanding of the relationship between culture and the performance of speech acts is particularly pertinent to a communicatively-oriented teaching approach. Similarly, students should be exposed to the link between culture and the organisation of oral and written discourse (e.g. turn-taking, back channelling, topic development, appropriate styles). The incorporation of research findings of 'lingua franca-type' encounters (for references, see previous section) into teaching materials, teaching perspectives and teacher training will assist in this endeavour[1]. This is best achieved by a close collaboration between applied linguists and language teaching professionals as has been the case for the integration of research findings in the areas of conversation analysis, discourse analysis and pragmatics which led to significant advances in a communicative approach to language teaching (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Hatch 1978, 1992, Kasper 1984, 1992, Thomas 1983, 1984).

Although language learning is not the only way in which intercultural understanding is or can be promoted in an era of globalisation, it is nevertheless a very prominent one. Taking account of some issues raised in this paper may make language learning practices more attuned to achieving intercultural understanding and hopefully reduce incidences of miscommunication or communication breakdown resulting from ignorance of the socio-cultural aspects of language use.

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# Primary socialisation and cultural factors in second language learning: wending our way through semi-charted territory

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## Introduction

> Our attitude towards what we listen to is determined by our habits. We expect things to be said in the way in which we are accustomed to talk ourselves: things that are said some other way do not seem the same at all but seem rather incomprehensible.... thus, one needs already to be have been educated in the way to approach each subject.
>
> (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Book II, cited in Scribner 1979)

Differences in ways in which students from non-western backgrounds approach the task of second language learning, particularly ESL/EFL, have been discussed by a number of writers: Osterloh (1980), Maley (1983, 1984), Matalene (1985), Ramirez (1986), Bassino (1986), Reid (1987), Hinds (1987), Willett (1987), Riley (1988), Tinkham (1989), Burnaby and Yilin (1989), Kumaravadivelu (1991), Scollon (1991), Scollon and Wong-Scollon (1991), Oxford, Hollaway and Horton-Murillo (1992), and Xia Wang (1994). Discussions in literature on learning generally have dealt with the thinking and/or problem-solving processes of non-western and pre-literate cultures (Gladwin 1964, Cole and Bruner 1971, Scribner 1979), the participant structures in societies and in schools (Erikson and Mohatt 1982, Jordan 1995, Lipka 1991), or the disjuncture for some between the world of primary socialization and the world of schooling (Phelan, David and Hanh 1991, Heath 1982, Au and Jordan 1981, Au 1993).

This paper explores the relationships between certain cultural factors related to language use, and attitudes at both micro (classroom) and macro (society) levels and their possible impact upon ESL learning. Although the primary focus is on ESL learning, the discussion of attitudes at the macrolevel inevitably encompasses academic learning generally. Pedagogical implications will be exemplified with cases of successful incorporation of the understandings and behaviours that learners bring with them to classroom programs and practices. It will also describe how these understandings can be put into effect in the provision of programs that enhance students' chances of academic success. A research agenda is also suggested in order to answer questions of the type that Riley (1988:29) has posed, whether "[cultural variation]

is ... important enough to merit taking consideration, or should we bypass it and go straight on to individual variation?"

The difficulties in discussing cultural factors in ESL learning and attitudes globally are that statements relevant in one or more contexts of learning may not be relevant in some other contexts. It is generally believed that most children learning a second language have not developed an attitude – positive or negative – toward the target language (TL) or the TL people (Macnamara 1973, Genesee and Hamayan 1980), but the converse is generally true for older learners, especially at the beginning stages of second language learning (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). It must also be acknowledged that within any one cultural group there is variation in behaviour, including learning behaviour. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern certain patterns of behaviour, or primary tendencies, within a cultural or sub-cultural group that permit one to address learners as a group, a point also emphasised by Bennett (1995). This is sometimes regarded as 'stereotyping' and an argument may be dismissed by invoking this word. Behaviours of a particular group of people need to be viewed as a set of data that indicates a primary tendency, the hump on a curve, if you will, with lots of variation on either side of it.

There are many factors that impinge upon second language learning (see, for example, Schumann 1978, Stern 1983, Gardner 1988, Spolsky 1989). This paper looks at the social context of learning but within that context limits itself to cultural factors and the power relationships that exist in any one social group (microlevel) and the power relationships that exist between a group and another group, usually more dominant (the macrolevel). The discussion of cultural factors in ESL learning focuses on 'language use', that is, the way a group uses language to enact social relationships, to enter into exchanges, and to construct reality. Primary socialization enculturates members of a particular group into language use so that some uses and some attitudes to types of language are more salient in their everyday life. This paper will consider how language is used in writing, ways in which texts are used as well as what constitutes legitimate reading in a culture, and the ways in which oral interactions are structured and the purposes they achieve. It reviews research that suggests that these diverse functions of language are dependent upon the investment of legitimacy conferred upon them by the society.

The discussion on attitudes will dwell upon actions that people take in their lives, either at the level of specific interactions in particular contexts (e.g. in classrooms or other contexts of learning – microlevel), or at a more macrolevel where attitudes towards institutions and curricula are made manifest. Both types of attitudes may be moderated by learner personality and background factors and these may account for attitudinal variation within any socially defined group, but these latter factors will not be discussed.

## Cultural Factors

### Writing

The influence of cultural thought patterns upon writing, especially in academic contexts, was suggested by Kaplan as far back as 1966. He claimed that students from cultures where the rhetorical features of expository writing were different from those used in English academic writing had to learn the English patterns if they were to successfully communicate with their

professors in English-speaking academic institutions. While his ideas have been questioned since then (see, for example, Mohan and Lo 1985) and his more recent writings (Kaplan 1987) have emphasised the complexity of issues involved, his work, nevertheless, has drawn the attention of teachers to the transition that second language learners have to effect if they are to be successful within the norms and requirements of English-speaking academic institutions (something that some native speakers also have to learn in order to be successful in academic contexts. Recently, the work of Hinkel (1994) has showed that L1 rhetorical approaches to writing in ESL may still influence writers despite many years of ESL composition instruction.

The hurdle for second language learners in western academic contexts does not, however, simply consist of adopting a new rhetorical pattern of writing, but also involves the adoption of an almost new way of thinking, approaching knowledge, and new understandings of the types of evidence that lend legitimacy to that knowledge. Ballard and Clanchy (1988), for example, discuss the case of a graduate Japanese student who had written an essay comparing the ideas of two economists, Friedman and Samuelson. In his writing he talked about the different backgrounds of these two economists and generally tried to explain why two authorities on economics might come to such different conclusions. An interview with the student showed that the student could not not bring himself to criticise the ideas of these two renowned writers. He therefore attempted what he considered a more appropriate solution to the task, and tried to justify their views through an evaluation of their backgrounds and experiences that might have led them to their conclusions. For the student both views were legitimate, but the assignment required that he take a stand and argue for one writer's position over the other's or highlight the relative merits and weaknesses of both writers, a requirement that went against the grain of his primary socialization.

Rhetorical styles of writing of a society reflect the values and the ways in which ideas and interactions are perceived in that society and the goals that are achieved through them (Clancy 1990). In some cultures, direct criticism is regarded as contributing to disharmony and where harmony in the society is highly valued many things remain unsaid or are left at the level of implications which can be denied if they are contested. The academia in the English-speaking world, on the other hand, values authentic voice, self-expression, stylistic innovation, a directness in academic texts which stresses a clear formulation of a case, a stance, and the citation of evidence to prove one's case (Matalene 1985). The primary responsibility for conveying the information and arguments lies with the writer and therefore a high degree of explicitness is required.

Hinds (1987) has argued that while classical writing in Japanese was indeed "reader responsible", modern writing has become more "writer responsible". Mohan and Lo (1985) make similar claims after analyzing classical and modern Chinese writing: the trend is towards more directness, particularly, it seems, by those who have studied in an English-speaking environment. However, Xia Wang (1994), who examined some Chinese writing instruction booklets, found that the pedagogical presentation of writing emphasised implicitness in the introduction and conclusion, and the exploration of the theme from multiple perspectives: comprehension was the reader's responsibility. Matalene (1985) has argued that Chinese writing incorporates a lot of proverbs, maxims and pieces of folklore and that 'invention' for the Chinese generally means doing it the way it has been done before. It would seem, therefore, that in countries like China and Japan there are trends in formal writing towards making it

more writer responsible. In the case of the former, however, it appears that instructional practices at school level may not have caught up with this trend yet, as suggested by the work of Xia Wang (1994).

The difficulties that some ESL learners encounter may be not so much due to the way writing is structured in their society per se but may lie in the more deep-seated values regarding attitudes to ideas and writers (particularly 'experts') that are internalised as part of the primary socialization. The Japanese student mentioned above is a case in point. He could not bring himself to be critical of writers who were regarded as experts in their field. Teachers of English for Academic Purposes and university professors remark upon ESL learners' inability (or unwillingness) to read texts critically (Allan 1996). Such social values are resistant to easy change and a change in one value may affect a complex of values. For example, it may be that being critical of experts may also be related to attitudes towards older people in one's culture, so that a change in one area may also have ramifications for another. Frequently the difficulties in the production of academic writing by ESL learners are discussed in terms of expert and novice abilities (Zamel 1982, Richards 1990) but do not touch upon cultural patterns of thinking and behaviour that underpin ways that ESL learners write. When changes are demanded by changing circumstances or new contexts, the process is a difficult, and often a painful one, as the writer's own ESL learning attests. Canagarajah (1993), for example, shows how Tamil learners of English experienced a "tension or discomfort in the confrontation between the discourse they preferred and the discourses informing the ESOL course" (Canagarajah 1993:621).

Classroom activities which are aimed at the 'surface' level of organisation of academic texts may not be successful because the underlying social practices in L1 writing are not addressed, or contrasts between the two processes are not made sufficiently explicit. Students, in effect, have to be encouraged to become bicultural and adopt new patterns of behaviour in order to operate successfully in the new environment, and ways of doing this in the classroom have to be addressed.

## Reading

The literature on reading discusses a number of studies that show that the background knowledge of readers has an influence upon the comprehension and retention of a written text and the type of elaborations that are made by readers as they construct a model of the text (e.g. Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson 1979, Pritchard 1990). There has been a considerable amount of discussion on background knowledge (the schema theory) in relation to first language reading (Adams and Collins 1979, Rumelhart 1980, Anderson 1984) as well as second (e.g. Carrell 1983, 1987, Carrell and Eisterhold 1983, Prahlad 1993). This paper will not dwell upon these studies. Instead, it looks at ways in which learners from different social backgrounds approach text. In many cultures the written word, especially if it is written by an 'expert', is accepted uncritically because of the respect and high regard that is accorded to such writers (Osterloh 1980, Maley 1983, Ozog 1987, Kwan-Terry 1994). In Islamic countries Koranic reading does not encourage the questioning of the text because it is accepted as the divine word, "entirely mature, accomplished, and unalterable" (Osterloh 1980:58). Authority is conferred upon a text by the status of the author and readers do not form their own personal opinion but use the "collective opinions that dominated [their] previous social experience" (Osterloh

1980:80). This type of attitude is further reinforced in those educational systems where reading texts is an exercise in extracting the ideas of the writer but not necessarily evaluating them critically (see, for example, Kwan-Terry 1994). A number of texts may be read in which different ideas are discussed, sometimes at variance with one another, and readers try to reconcile or accept them as different ways of approaching a topic because of differences in the writer's experiences (as in the example of the Japanese student given previously).

The comprehension of a text involves a process of construction that draws upon the prior knowledge of the reader, as well as the interaction of a number of component skills (Grabe 1991). But it is also a selective process in that readers focus upon elements of the text that are socially most salient to them, as Pritchard (1990) shows. In his study, proficient American and Palauan readers at college level read two texts on funeral arrangements. One text dealt with typical Anglo-American funeral arrangements, the other with Palauan. He found that the Palauan readers tried to relate the unfamiliar text to the type of personalised information they considered foremost. Given below are three examples from the think-aloud protocols of the Palauan subjects.

1. Either her mother or father wrote a letter to her.
2. When did they come ... contact her? Was it her mother's father or her father's father?
3. On Monday they were very busy so maybe ... they couldn't tell her or call her ... so she couldn't ... make it or she was just so far away.

(Pritchard 1990:287)

These examples show that the Palauan students, like other readers, relate what is read to their background knowledge. For Paluan readers this means focusing on the relationships of the people involved in the letters, thus highlighting that reading is driven by what is socially most salient in this Pacific society, the relationships between people and the types of behaviours resulting from them.

The social practices of a group also influence what is read by that group. The texts that are read, in a sense, are socially approved. Heath (1983), for example, discusses the type of reading (religious and non-fiction) that the Rockville parents considered appropriate and valid. Mangubhai (1986a, 1987), writing about literacy in the South Pacific, discusses the type of reading that is approved in Fijian society – the reading of the Bible and other religious writings. A literacy event such as a young Fijian person in a village sitting down to read stories for leisure would be regarded as evidence of laziness and avoidance of work that needs to be done either in the plantation for boys or in the house for girls. Reading practices are socially situated in terms of both the meanings that are normally constructed from them and what counts as legitimate reading (see also Kulick and Stroud 1993).

The practices of writing and reading are, however, not universal and were even less so a mere two hundred years ago. There are still languages in the world for which there are no orthographies. Where such languages are given an orthography it has been suggested that the functions that writing performs intially in these language groups mirrors the functions that are enacted through oral speech (Kulick and Stroud 1993). The following section discusses the oral use of language and looks at some cultural practices that underpin such use.

## Interactional Features

In the study of oral interactions, and particularly pragmatic considerations in such interactions, considerable work has been carried out showing misunderstandings in commmunication arising from different value systems and perceptions about the topics (e.g. Kasper 1989, 1992, Richards and Sukwiwat 1982), misunderstandings arising from the use of L1 intonational patterns in L2 (e.g. Gumperz 1982, Mishra 1982), and and those arising from using L1 thematic structure in L2 (Gumperz, Aulakh and Kaltman 1982). Gumperz (1982), for example, discusses the perception of native English speakers of an East Asian woman serving food in a cafeteria as rude because she asks customers if they wanted gravy with a falling rather than rising intonation – an element in her L1 which had no feature of impoliteness attached to it.

Other studies have gone beyond the language involved in interactions to ways in which oral interactions are structured in a society (Young 1982, Scollon and Scollon 1981, Scollon 1991). Scollon and Scollon (1981), who studied the Athabascan Indians in Canada, found that their conversation practices, including their use of a greater pause before speaking, led the American English speakers to perceive the Athabascans as silent, withdrawn and somewhat hostile, while the Athabascans perceived the Americans as rude, pushy and aggressive. In an interactive context the Americans felt they had to talk because the Athabascans would not say anything. The Athbascans, on the other hand, felt that they were never given an opportunity to speak.[1] (These should properly be regarded as propensities within an American sub-culture because of the multicultural composition of the American population and, as Tannen (1984) shows, even within a subculture, there are differences in speaking styles between males and females.)

Scollon and Scollon (1991) also discuss another aspect of conversation suggested by Schegloff (1972): that the person who begins an exchange has the right to introduce the topic. Such an exchange may begin by the ring of a telephone or the doorbell, or someone putting their head into one's room and saying something like 'Hi Razika' or 'Excuse me, John', or by calling out for someone across the road. In each case it is the person who initiates the conversational exchange who introduces the topic of conversation.[2] It would be a very odd exchange if the person who is being called to a conversation were to begin to talk about, for example, his or her plans for the coming summer holiday. The expected behaviour is some form of a conventional response, like 'hello' on the phone or a simple 'yes' or a body signal that acknowledges that the call has been heeded.

Using this framework, Scollon and Scollon (1991) find that Chinese 'callers' frequently do not introduce the topic immediately so a speaker from an English-speaking background is puzzled about the point of the whole conversation. They suggest the pattern for Chinese speakers is not 'call-answer-introduce the topic' but 'call-answer-facework' and in some cases an optional topic. The topic is optional especially when favours are being sought, and the supposedly idle chatter is part of 'facework' which allows the initiator to assess the situation for the likely success of the proposed request. Where it is judged that there is a high chance of success in getting what he or she wants, the real topic of the conversation is introduced: where it is judged that the chances of success are very low, then the topic is avoided and thus there is a saving of face, both on the part of the initiator and on the part of the second interactant who now does not have to say 'no' to a request, a point also made by a subject in Young (1982).

The 'facework' portion of a conversational exchange has ramifications for cross-cultural communication, for it is quite likely that a Chinese speaker would not expect his caller to begin immediately with the topic and may therefore pay somewhat less attention to it. Scollon and Scollon (1991) conclude that the consequence of such a difference in expectation is that "both conversationalists may remember exactly the same details from a conversation, but each will ascribe quite different values to the items. This, we think, is the basis of the perennial uneasiness both Asians and Westerners feel in their mutual conversations" (Scollon and Scollon 1991:116-117). This is a rather broad generalization, but one that is worthy of further investigation.

Facework is an element not just in Chinese conversational structure. It is also found in the writer's own culture (Gujarati) as in the example below.

[At a wedding reception, organised by the bride's family, where guests are seated in rows and served food. The bride's parents or relatives take special care to see that the immediate family and close relatives of the bridegroom are fed well. B represents a person from the bride's side and G from groom's.]

B: *Have some more food.*

G: *No, no, I am full. I have eaten too much.*

B: *You haven't eaten very much. Have some more* (ladling some food, which is countered by B putting his hands over the plate so that food cannot be put onto it).

G: *No, no, I have had enough.*

B: *Only a little.*

G: *No, no ...* (hands moving away from the plate slowly).

B: *I'll just give you a little bit.*

G: *No, no, I have eaten too much* (by now hands have moved away from the plate to its side, thus opening up a space for B to give G some more food).

B: *There, I'll only put a little on your plate* (ladling some food onto the plate).

G: *OK, only because you insist.*

(Personal observations)

Quite a complex ritual has been enacted in this exchange, with underlying meanings not evident in the actual words used in the moves. For G to have accepted more food as soon as it was offered would have diminished him in the eyes of B, as being a 'khaadro' – a gluttonous person, but the Gujarati word is more pejorative. For B not to have insisted that G have more food would have diminished him in the eyes of G (and G's party). This would be interpreted that the bride's side was being mean in not providing enough food and making sure that guests were fed well. The ritual that is enacted leaves both parties satisfied, with no loss of face.

The notion of face operates a little differently in the case of Nigerians (Igbo) according to Nwoye (1992). He argues that prevention of loss of face for the group – defined as "any social unit larger than the individual, it is constituted concentrically by the nuclear family, the extended family, the clan, the village, the town, and the ethnic group on expanding order" (Nwoye 1992:315) – takes precedence over loss of face for an individual, underscoring the fact that in some communities the group has precedence over the individual or the immediate family.

The discussion above might suggest that facework is not a feature of Anglo-Celtic societies. This is not so. The critical difference, however, is that many Asian societies are what is termed 'high-face' societies, where loss of face is felt very keenly and has greater social ramifications (see Hofstede 1986).

The degree of explicitness and control in talk may vary from culture to culture also. Yokota (1994) studied videotapes of Japanese politicians discussing an issue on television and found that question forms which led to 'Yes/No' response were rarely used because such questions reflect a strong degree of turn and topic control. The more common phenomenon was the usage of tag-like constructions which are weak in both turn and topic control. Similarly, in discussing an aspect of Nigerian oral interaction pattern, Bennett (1995) claims that explicit speech is directed towards children and that adult talk is more indirect, with speakers giving each other sufficiently detailed information for the listener to infer what is intended. To talk directly to an adult Nigerian is to treat the person like a child. The degree of implicitness in some cultures is summed up by Hoshikawa for Japanese thus:

> What is often verbally expressed and what is actually intended are two different things. What is verbally expressed is probably important enough to maintain friendship, and it is generally called *tatemae* which means simply 'in principle' but what is not verbalised counts most – *honne* which means 'true mind'. Although it is not expressed verbally, you are supposed to know it by *kan* – 'intuition'.
>
> (Hoshikawa 1978: 228-229, cited in Hinds 1987:144)

Another aspect of oral interactions that has a bearing on the development of interactions is the relative statuses of the participants. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) found that Japanese speakers of English in the USA included or excluded expressions of apology or regret in refusing invitations depending upon the status of the person who had invited them. This was in contrast to the dominant Anglo-American structure which was guided by the degree of familiarity with the person making the invitation. Similarly, age is an important factor in many cultures, frequently determining the order of speakers (Scollon and Wong-Scollon 1991).

A feature of oral interactions that reflects a different sociocultural orientation from that in mainstream English-speaking societies is the different ways verbal information is sought. Eades (1993) discusses the way Aboriginal speakers of English use direct questions to seek "orientation information", such as clarification of topic, background details about people, time, place and setting, generally in the form of a statement with a rising intonation at the end. Where substantial information is sought, such as important personal details or reasons, questions are not used. Instead the person seeking information presents the information he or she has and then becomes silent, with the expectation that the interactant will supply further information on the topic introduced. These modes of verbal behaviour reflect the socially constructed and approved modes of behaviour.

The patterns of oral interactions discussed above are not simply exchanges about goods and services, to use Halliday's (1985) terms, but at a cultural level conform to certain expected behaviours, the non-fulfilment of which can result in social disapproval. Interactions in many cultures do not develop according to the Gricean principles of cooperation and the maxims of sincerity, clarity and quantity (see also, Riley 1988, Harris 1995) because other more powerful social values such as face, harmonious relationships, age and status may intervene.

The next section discusses how attitudes of learners can have an impact upon second language learning, and in some cases on learning in school contexts generally.

## Attitudes I: Microlevel

Attitudes can operate at the level at which learning activites are organised (microlevel) or at the level of society (macrolevel). Attitudes at macrolevel can lead to a rejection of both the content and processes of learning. While there has been much discussion in the literature about attitudes (e.g., Gardner and Lambert 1972, Oller, Hudson and Liu 1977, Gardner 1985, Spolsky 1989), this paper does not dwell upon matters such as learners' attitudes to the TL, the TL speakers, the target language culture, or the social value of language (see Tollefson 1991 and Fairclough 1989 for a critical discussion of some of these issues). Instead, it looks at attitudes at the level of learning itself, at a microlevel. Such attitudes include, for example, the attitude to the teacher as an authority figure, the attitude to text, criticism of others' ideas, belief about how a second language is learned, and so on. Without going into the social psychology of attitude, a number of general observations about attitudes need to be made (see Ellis 1994). Attitudes are both cognitive (one can think about them) and affective (have feelings and emotions attached to them). They are on a continuum rather than representing a dichotomy, that is, attitudes about things can be more or less favourable. Attitudes are formed as part of one's socialization and they are persistent though they may be subject to modification through subsequent experience. The point that needs emphasis is that these attitudes are shaped by actions and events experienced as one grows up in a particular culture and have an impact upon the cognitive functioning of an individual, a point emphasised by Geertz.

> The accepted view that mental functioning is essentially an intracerebral process, which can only be secondarily assisted or amplified by the various artificial devices which the process has enabled man to invent, appears to be quite wrong.... Rather than culture acting only to supplement, develop and extend organically based capacities logically and genetically prior to it, it would seem to be ingredient to those capacities themselves. A cultureless human being would probably turn out to be not an intrinsically talented though unfulfilled ape, but a wholly mindless and consequently unworkable monstrosity.
>
> (Geertz 1973:76, 78)

These attitudes may be of varying strengths depending upon the precise experiences in our lives that have shaped them. In a survey of parental attitudes to the teaching of foreign languages, particularly recently introduced Asian languages like Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian, carried out some years ago in the state of Queensland in Australia, there were quite lengthy comments from a few parents who could not see why the State was making Japanese one of the priority foreign languages (Postle and Mangubhai 1991). They wrote at length about the role of the Japanese in the second world war. There was no way of exploring further whether these parents were themselves involved in fighting during the war or had lost members of their family, but it seems that the very strong feelings expressed about the teaching of the Japanese language suggest that their personal experience, directly or indirectly, of the war would have shaped their attitudes towards the Japanese and their language.

Another attitude that ESL/EFL learners may bring to their classroom, both in a context where English is spoken as a native tongue and where it is learned as a foreign language, is the high regard in which teachers are held (Ting 1987, Kwan-Terry 1994), the socially grounded inability of students to question them, and the reverential attitude towards the printed word. Such ESL learners come from cultures where teachers are held in high regard because traditionally they were the repositories of knowledge. In the Indian tradition, for example, a

young man who sought knowledge – and traditionally it was knowledge of religious type – would seek a 'guru' or teacher to whom he would listen, and would be directed by him. The Hindi word to describe the 'learner' is *chelaa* which more properly translates as 'disciple' rather than learner. The relationship between the *guru* and the *chelaa* is asymmetrical and it is acknowledged *overtly* as such by both parties. It has been socially constituted and thus, in a sense, approved, and has been recreated in each generation right up to the present. Children growing up within such a culture have abstracted from the multiple instances of teacher-learner events (reinforced by parents) a set of attitudes which determine their behaviour in that particular context.[3] They are resistent to easy change and early changes in behaviour can be marked by some discomfort and an acute awareness of the new type of behaviour. That some school systems and teachers encourage students to disagree with the teacher (with reasons) in certain contexts can be both a surprise and cause an initial negative evaluation of the teacher who encourages such behaviour, as shown in this exchange taken from Kumaravadivelu (1991:105-106):

S3: *This is ...*

S4: *Large*

S3: *Big size*

T2: *Too big? Too large? Oh, some thing ...*

S3: *Big for her ... and uh ...*

S4: *The price ...*

S3: *A little costly ...*

T2: *Too expensive*

S4: *No ... not ... a little costly*

T2: *OK, so you won't choose that because it is too expensive ...*

S3: *I think it's costly.*

T2: *Yeah, in English we say too expensive.*

S3: *I can't say costly?*

T2: *Well, ...* ( a long pause) *Costly is OK, yeah, but more often ... probably we say expensive..*

S3: *OK, you are my teacher ...* (laughs)

T2: *No, you don't have to agree with me ...*

S3: *I don't have to?*

Kumaravadivelu says that there is an "almost derisive response with a sense of surprise".

Attitudes at the microlevel do undergo a change, the rate and extent of which is dependent upon whether the second language learners are in a migrant context or in a context of 'short-stay'. Laaksonen (1994) found that while international students (short-stay) take part in peer assessment under the guidance of the teachers, they are initially very reluctant to do this. Using semi-structured interview techniques she collected data that show that some of the students are willing to try out newer approaches to their learning in the new context, but they state that

they would revert to previous ways when they returned to their own countries. Given below is a reason by a Laotian student why he was willing to try peer assessment in the context of learning ESL in Australia.

> If you express your weak points and somebody knows your weak points then they dislike you ... when I was in our country, I was a bit shy, even though I couldn't or didn't want to express my strengths or weaknesses to my friends or to my parents, but here I think more or less I can express or show other people my weakness or strengths. (Laotian student [F2] male)
>
> (Laaksonen 1994:220)

In a social context where the effects of self-revelation are minimised and, in a sense, localised, this student is willing to allow other students to make judgements about the strengths or weaknesses of his writing, but such behaviour back home would, he considers, exact too great a price in terms of his or her standing in the community.

In the same study, other students from Indonesia indicated that they adopted as many of the behaviours suggested by their teachers as they considered might be necessary to achieve their goal of acquiring a qualification from an Australian university but were aware that they would need to go back to their own society and operate according to its norms for them to be successful.

These examples suggest that attitudes at microlevel can undergo a change if the context of learning is conducive to such changes. The teachers need to provide an environment in which learners are willing to undertake newer behaviours, which in some cases, as described above, may go against the behaviours shaped by primary socialization. It is the sensitivity of the teachers to such potential mismatches between the students' prior learning experiences and their current ones that may lead to a classroom milieu which facilitates the transition that the students may have to make (and in some cases the teacher also).

## Attitudes 2: Macrolevel

We all live in many different 'worlds': the world of our own household, the world of work, the church, sports clubs, women's clubs and so on. Gee (1990) refers to this as participating in different discourses in different settings. The world of the formal school system is a literate world in which full participation requires one to be initiated into particular literate behaviours that "instill problem-solving abilities and knowledge-creating resources" (Heath 1987:vii) and lie at the other end of the literacy continuum from that which promotes only basic reading and writing. Schooling requires students to participate in complex forms of academic literacy even though their occurrence may not be widespread in all the communities in which the institutions are set. The sociocultural context of school can be very different from the one they inhabit outside school, with different values and different ways of interacting. In some cases there might be minimal intersection between the two.

For many migrants, especially those who have moved from a less industrialised to a highly industrialised country, the change that is expected to be made is a very marked one and can be very bewildering if the social practices in the two countries are very different. To participate fully in the new environment immigrants have to develop another set of attitudes and values. Depending upon the age of the immigrants at the time of arrival in the new country, the new set of values and attitudes is developed to varying degrees, with some older migrants adopting

only those aspects that enable them to operate in the workplace and carry out their daily social needs outside the home and their particular social group.

For many children of migrants the first sustained contact with new values and attitudes occurs when they enter the formal school system, which generally reflects the values and attitudes of the dominant members of that society.

Some migrant groups learn to makes changes in their behaviours so that they can take advantage of the perceived benefits that the new country offers them, without feeling that their cultural identity is being threatened. Ogbu (1991), for example, says that some

> minority children do well in school even though they do not share the language and cultural backgrounds of the dominant group that are reflected in the curriculum contents, instructional style and other practices of the schools.
>
> (Ogbu 1991:29)

He cites examples of Punjabi and other East Asian students' relatively strong academic achievement in British and Californian school systems resulting from the adoption of a strategy of "accommodating" to a new environment without becoming "assimilated" into it. In other words, they learn to operate in two worlds, the world in which they have been socialised and the new world into which the initiation for non-adults is through the formal school system. In most cases, both worlds are supported by the parents of immigrant children because the second world is seen as an entry into prosperity.

Other groups which have been colonised and are a minority in their own country, as in the case of the Aboriginals in Australia and the Indians in the USA and Canada, do not perform as well in the dominant educational system. These groups do not fully share power with the dominant group and tend to fall into the lower socio-economic groups in the country. They frequently have a history of brutal subjugation and denigration of their way of life. Such groups may reject outright the systems and values of the dominant group. Some Aboriginals in Australia react to the dominant group's education system by resisting it or by ritualizing it (Teasdale 1990). Such ritualizing is explained by Christie and Harris (1985). In their study they found that Aboriginal students exhibited three beliefs about the way they would achieve their education:

> Firstly, their mere presence in school ritually endows them with education. Secondly, the careful performance of ritualised classroom activities (copying from the blackboard, reading loudly in chorus, etc.) is efficacious. Thirdly, the age grade stages as they move up through school (rather than by any particular school-learned skill like the ability to read and write). The individual creative and self-directed effort which is crucial to academic learning, is de-emphasised and, in fact, considered irrelevant.
>
> (Christie and Harris 1985:83)

Attitudes at macrolevel toward the educational system of the dominant group or culture may result in two forms of actions: an attempt to learn the rules and forms of behaviours to operate in the dominant group while minimizing its effect on their own value systems, or an outright rejection of the values of the dominant group and therefore its educational system. Such rejection at the global level results in a rejection also of the new literate behaviours in the second language (or dialect in some cases) that are critical in a formal school system. The choice is not a simple one, but as Cole and Bruner (1971) point out when

> cultures are in competition for resources, as they are today, the psychologist's task is to analyse the

> source of cultural difference so that those of the minority, the less powerful group, may quickly acquire the intellecutal instruments necessary for success of the dominant culture, *should they so choose*.
>
> (Cole and Bruner 1971:246, emphasis added)

It would seem newer ways of educating the less dominant groups in a society need to be explored (Lucas and Katz 1994). In the Australian context, for example, two-way schooling has been established for isolated Aboriginal communities, where skills and knowledge from both the Aboriginal communities and the wider community are taught and highly valued. The processes of learning for the two types of knowledge and skills are distinct and relate to respective cultures. Importantly, the whole enterprise is controlled by Aboriginal people (Harris 1990).

## Pedagogical Implications

The paper has argued that the way and purposes for which language is used in one's primary socialisation may have some impact upon second language learning and use. One pedagogical implication, especially that in relation to language use, is to sensitise teachers to the types of differences rooted in understandings about language use developed during the primary socialization of their learners and brought to the ESL learning task. These differences are more marked for learners from some groups whose primary socialisation instil values and attitudes that are quite differerent from those of the target language speakers. However, any implications that are drawn have to take into account the precise backgrounds of the learners: (1) whether the second language is being learned in their home countries or in the TL country, (2) the age of the learners, (3) the level of literacy in the L1, (4) the power relations with the dominant group if learners come from a minority group, and so on. As a corollary to the sensitization of language teachers is the need for teachers to reflect upon the ways of learning that students bring to classrooms and consider some of these as strengths upon which future learning can be built (Maley 1984, Tinkham 1989, Luke 1996). Evidence shown by Fillmore (1983) lends support to this. In her study of good language learners she found that 4 of the 18 good language learners were shy and uncommunicative, but very attentive listeners and quite observant. While our current understandings about the role of interaction in the development of second language would lead us to believe that these learners might not have made as much progress as those who participated in classroom activities more actively, this was not the case.

> These children tended to pay close attention when their teachers talked to them, and they seemed to be observing, if not participating in, most of the activities that took place in the classroom around them.... Such learners generally gave little evidence that they were learning anything, at least until they were prodded into making some sort of response to our elicitation efforts. Then they let us know that *there is more than one way to learn a new language*.
>
> (Fillmore 1983:165, emphasis added)

The work of Fillmore and her colleagues is a reminder to the field of second language teachers, especially of English, to reflect on itself to see whether there might not be elements of Eurocentrism in the second language learning and teaching approaches that are advocated and are used in classrooms (see also Riley 1988, Tinkham 1989, Maley 1983, Barnlund 1987, Oster 1989, Burnaby and Yilin Sun 1989, Fairclough 1989, Holliday, 1994 and Tollefson 1991).

The type of action that teachers may take in their classrooms depends upon the instructional context. Such action may be more difficult in some contexts than in others. For example, where

classes have learners from a variety of backgrounds it may not be possible to devise one pedagogical solution. Teaching strategies that incorporate more group work or ones that make more explicit the demands of the task in a second language (see Oi 1986, Bassino 1986) need further investigation. On the other hand, there are contexts in which classes are more homogeneous in terms of the background(s) of the students. Two broad types of actions that are possible in such contexts are suggested, exemplified with some successful examples.

The first type of action attempts to incorporate into classroom pedagogy certain aspects of the cultural practices of learners so that there is a greater compatibility between the teaching act and the ways of learning and behaving which students bring to the learning environment. One such early experiment was conducted in Warm Springs Indian Reservation in the USA (Phillips 1972), which showed that changes in the participant structure in class so that the occurrence of speech was not dictated solely by the teacher resulted in a better learning environment for the students.

Another successful example of culturally sensitive pedagogical modification is the Hawaiian Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) (Au and Jordan 1981). In this early reading programme, the emphasis in reading was changed from phonics to comprehension. In addition, the classroom organisation was altered so that students were working in small groups (usually three to five students) in what were called 'learning centers'. Direct interaction with the teacher on a one-to-one basis was limited to about 20-25 minutes per day. This approach has produced much better reading results. Au and Jordan (1981) conclude that:

> a major problem in teaching Hawaiian children to read appears to be that they do not recognise ordinary reading lessons as situations which call for the application of their full range of cognitive and linguistic abilities. The KEEP program seems to be effective at least partly because it employs a special type of reading lesson, one which resembles talk story and storytelling, major speech events in Hawaiian culture.
>
> (Au and Jordan 1981:151)

More recently, Ladson-Billings (1995) studied the pedagogical practices of eight exemplary teachers of Afro-American students and identified three key factors: (1) the conceptions of self and others held by the teachers, (2) the manner in which social relations are structured by the teachers, and (3) the conceptions of knowledge held by the teachers. Ladson-Billings' work emphasises the critical role of cultural awareness in both the types of relationships that are established in classroom and in ways that knowledge is constructed.

A similar sympathetic orientation can be seen in the work that is being carried out by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning in California. Its approach to ESL learning eschews a single model for all low English proficiency students. Instead, it seeks to encourage teachers to adjust the curriculum, and method of instruction, and to use the L1 to meet the varying needs of students. Such an orientation encourages teachers to guide students towards the discovery of a deeper understanding of the pedagogical material through discussion that takes into account student ideas and background, what Luke (1996) has described as taking into account the "cultural capital" that learners bring to learning.

A somewhat different form of adaptation is suggested by Malcolm (1987), an adaptation that is two way. He suggests that both students and teachers have to change to meet the challenges of a particular classroom, a point not unlike that made by Jordan (1985):

> Educational practices must match with the children's culture in ways which ensure the generation of academically important behaviours. It does not mean that all school practices need be completely congruent with natal cultural practices, in the sense of exactly or even closely matching or agreeing with them. The point of cultural compatibility is that the natal culture is used as a guide in the selection of educational program elements so that academically desired behaviours are produced and undesired behaviours are avoided.
>
> (Jordan 1985:110)

The examples given above reflect an understanding of the language and learning practices of a group of students incorporated into pedagogical practices so that the disjuncture between patterns of learning and language use internalised during one's primary socialization is made less marked. They do not suggest the transfer of social practices holus-bolus into the classroom because that may be quite inappropriate for the longer term development of academic abilities of students in an institution that is primarily a particular type of literate environment (Olson 1977).[4]

The second type of action is exemplied by some work carried out in Fiji. In the Fijian context, particularly in the rural areas, there are very few reading materials in any language available, and both the indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian (East Asians) societies generally do not actively encourage wide reading. In the former society a 'legitimate' form of reading involves religious texts while in the latter the texts, for students, are school textbooks. (In urban areas the the range of reading is much wider for both social groups and many tertiary-educated parents do encourage wider reading, but the patterns of interaction based on book reading found in similar homes in English-speaking societies is generally absent (cf. Heath 1982, for example).) In order to bridge the gap between the types of reading activities fostered in schools and in the home communities, it was decided to provide high-interest, well-illustrated story books in English[5] for students in Grades 4 and 5 in rural areas to read on a regular basis in their clasrooms (see Elley and Mangubhai 1981a, 1981b, 1983, Mangubhai 1986b). The project, called Book Flood, placed about about 250 books into each of Grades 4 and 5 and teachers were asked to provide 20-30 minutes of classroom time for students to read them.[6] The reading activity replaced other activites in the normal structurally-based ESL program.

At the end of the first year the Book Flood classes were significantly better than the control classes in English reading and listening comprehension and grammar, but not in writing. The experiment was carried on for another year into Grades 5 and 6. At the end of the second year the Book Flood classes continued the gains in reading and listening comprehension and grammar, and were significantly better than the control classes on a writing test. The modal mark in writing for the experimental group was 9 out of 10, while for the control group it was only 2, a difference that is obvious in the examples below:

*Experimental Group*

- One morning when Luke's mother was washing, and the men were drinking yagona, Luke was boiling the water.
- One day, Tomasi's mother was washing clothes beside the river, Tomasi's father was drinking yaqona under a shady tree, Tomasi was cooking the food beside their house, and his brother was carrying buckets of water.

*Control Group*

- Is ther the women in the tree. Mothe sitg in the tree thee was a looking at hes mother...
- One day there boy Seru is make the tea to drinking his morth was the colth.
- One day morning their were a house any village by the sea ...

Moreover, an analysis of the results of a national examination at Grade 6 that only the indigenous Fijians took showed that students from Book Flood classes outperformed students from the control classes in Social Studies, Mathematics and even in the Fijian language test.

This project provided opportunities for students to participate in behaviours in the formal school system that were largely absent in their societies, behaviours that are more critical for academic achievement as one moves up the grades of primary level into high school. It provided what Wells (1981) has suggested:

> Where the skills associated with the representation of meaning in written language are not used or valued by the parents and other adults in the home environment, children will be less likely to accept the school's valuation of them, or to receive encouragement to persist with tasks that they may initially find difficult or lacking in meaning. However, even with lack of home support, it should be possible for a child to make progress commensurate with his intellectual potential, *if appropriate opportunities are provided at school.*
>
> (Wells 1981:264-265, emphasis added)

The type of books and the stress-free environment in which reading could be carried out by students made this an enjoyable activity for them and lent legitimacy to this behaviour within the classroom culture.

## A Research Agenda

The ESL field has not considered whether some approaches to learning that students bring with them can be utilised positively in language classrooms. For example, it is frequently stated in literature that some groups of second language learners are predisposed to rote learn. Can this approach to learning be utilised in order to teach, particularly at lower levels, chunks of languages that would be useful in conversational interactions and encouraging these students later to analyze them so that the resultant linguistic knowledge can be used more creatively? Tinkham (1989), for example, compared attitudes of Japanese and American students towards both rote learning and more creative learning and compared students' performance, given similar rote learning tasks. He found that his Japanese subjects did better at the rote learning task than the American students and suggests that teachers should take advantage of the strengths of students.[7]

Following suggestions made by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning and those of Lucas and Katz (1994), there is a need for the field of TESOL to look at the place of the first language in second language learning. To take the specific case of translation, we need to determine whether such behaviours assist in language development at some stage of second language learning, possibly at the earlier stages.[8] Current practices have tended to frown upon translation and have encouraged students to think in the second language as much as possible. In fact, we do not have any research to show at what stage students begin to think more in the second language and resort to translation only

when there is a serious problem in communication or understanding. In fact, it may be that translation is not a function of proficiency in the second language *per se*. Mangubhai (1991) found that one of his subjects tried to comprehend the second language from the very early stages of her learning and resorted to translation of utterances only when comprehension problems were encountered. It is likely that even at more advanced stages a certain amount of translation may occur when comprehension difficulties arise. The role of translation in second language learning should become part of our research agenda so that we have a better understanding of the cognitive behaviours of learners at various stages of proficiency in second language (see also Cohen 1995). If research were to show, for example, that there is a transition to thinking more in the target language at a particular level of proficiency (the definition of which, admittedly, may present another problem to solve), then teachers could begin to give positive encouragement to a shift towards thinking more in the second language for those students who theoretically ought to be able to do so.

A number of recent studies have shown that, for some learners, writing in L1 and then translating it into English produces a better product than when there is no opportunity to think through and write in the L1 (Kobayashi and Rinnert 1992, Brooks 1993). Similarly, Kern (1994) has shown that there is a role for translation in second language reading if it is used sensibly. These studies are an acknowledgment that translation does occur and that research needs to determine the circumstances under which it is most effective.

If research shows that certain approaches brought by learners to the task of learning a second language are an impediment to second language development then we can turn to the problem of the most efficacious ways in which teaching can be organised to take into account the learners' approaches. More importantly, it can begin to investigate effective ways to assist students in making the transition from their ways of learning to other, more efficient, ways of learning, taking into account the important role of affect as it relates to changes that teachers might wish to see in their students (see, for example, Oi and Kamimura 1995, who use a certain pedagogical strategy to raise the awareness of their students about the requirements of an argumentative essay in English).

Minimally, the research agenda in the area of cultural factors and second language learning should address the following questions:

1. (a) What are the learning approaches and strategies second language learners of different cultures bring to the learning task?
   (b) Which of these approaches or strategies do not lead to more efficient learning?
   (c) Which pedagogical (and other) strategies are most effective in helping students to incorporate other approaches and strategies to second language learning?
2. (a) Does a gradual change to other forms of instruction advocated in the literature on ESL teaching (for example, interactional) produce a better result than a sharp disjuncture between the instructional and learning modes of the learners and of the classroom?
   (b) Is this transition tied to level of proficiency or can it occur at all levels?
3. Is there a change in affect, lowering the affective filter (Krashen 1982), when pedagogical approaches take into account the learners' view of knowlege (and skills) and the manner of their acquisition?

## Conclusion

This paper has argued that primary socialization is a process of legitimizing language use in a society so that some uses become more salient and socially approved, while other uses are not given a social value. In learning a second language, learners have to learn to use and value other uses of language, which incorporate attitudes that may be in conflict with those developed during their primary socialization. Such conflicts are not easily resolved by some and require a sensitive approach on the part of the teacher in the classroom. In some instances values of the learner group may be so different, and their experiences at the hands of a dominant group so negative, that there may be a complete rejection of the values of the dominant group, with the resultant lack of achievement in the educational settings reflecting those values.

The paper also has also discussed selected examples of successful pedagogical approaches which take into account the cultural practices of learners or provide types of experiences which are absent in a social group but which are critical in an English-speaking educational context for success in that system. Through the discussion of the above matters and a suggested agenda for research, the question posed by Riley (1988) at the beginning of this paper is answered in the affirmative: that cultural factors do need to be taken into account when teaching a second language and not be conflated into a factor such as individual differences.

## Notes

1 What Scollon and Scollon found with the Athabascan Indians is also true in Fiji. When I worked in the Curriculum Development Unit of the Fiji Ministry of Education I had to chair occasional meetings called to consider some changes in curriculum that were advocated by the Minister of Education. Fiji has two major ethnic groups, the indigenous Fijians and the Indians. The latter were a bit like the American English speakers that Scollon and Scollon (1991) described, and if there was a pause they would begin speaking. In order to ensure that the Fijian members of the staff present at the meeting also had the opportunity to express their views, I frequently had to nominate them and ask them for their opinion. It was usually obvious from their replies that the matter under discussion had been given some thought by them and that they had followed the discussions quite closely, and they made a valuable contribution to the discussions.

2 Compare, however, buying an ice-cream, for example, where the topic is introduced immediately – 'one rum-and-raisin, please' – because the context for the interaction is predetermined and the attention of the seller is automatically expected.

3 Compare the attitude of the Chinese towards children's achievement at school. Education is regarded as an individual affair by both child and parent. If children do not do well at school, they are blamed, not the school or teachers (Pieke 1991).

4 Martin Nakata (1993) has attacked this assumption, arguing that the western education system should be problematised *vis-à-vis* learners from a society that has been colonised. He states that "to represent the [Torres Strait] Islander [in Australia] in other thematic schemes without making problematic the policies of 'culture' itself would be to accept epistemological schemas already in place, and to accept 'givens' and 'taken-for-granted' apparatuses that constitute fundamental premises between the dominant and the Islander" (p. 342).

[5] English was chosen because there was little appropriate reading matter for children in the vernaculars. In addition, by Grade 4 students have been learning English for three years and it becomes the language of instruction from Grade 4. In the the first three years the language of instruction is either Fijian or Hindi.

[6] One half of the experimental group read them silently using the USSR method (McCracken 1971), while the other half spent their allocated time in a Shared Book approach to reading (Holdaway 1979).

[7] Rote learning is a 'dirty' word in education but in certain contexts it may be an appropriate solution, especially in cases where there are only a few instances of a concept so that searching for the correct attribute may not be possible because of fewer trials.

[8] Translation has been suggested as a positive strategy by, for example, Oxford (1990).

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# Everyday speech as culture: implications for language teaching

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## Introduction

Recently the role of culture in language teaching has become increasingly important. In Australia, for example, cultural understanding has been proposed as the eighth key competency and cultural elements have been included in the curriculum statements and profiles for Languages (Australian Education Foundation 1994a) and English as a Second Language (Australian Education Foundation 1994b). At the same time, the understanding of what culture is and the ways it reflects language has changed considerably. In particular the relationship between culture and the everyday spoken language used in a society is something which has only recently come to be studied (for example Moerman 1988). This paper will examine the relationship between spoken language and culture from the perspective of language teaching and look at ways in which the study of naturally occurring conversation can be a useful tool in developing the teaching of culture in interaction.

The idea of incorporating cultural material into a language program is not new. What is new in contemporary approaches to language and culture is the ways in which cultural material is understood. In particular, those aspects of culture which underlie the ways in which people communicate every day are of particular importance in a communicative approach to language teaching. If languages are taught on the basis of messages that need to be communicated in the language, the appropriate ways to communicate such messages in the culture also need to be taught. That is, the communicative approach must be a cultural approach if it is to achieve the objectives it has set for itself.

It is indisputable that the communicative approach to language teaching has revolutionized language programs and language text books. Language teachers are now aware of the language functions which students need to be able to control, and of the tasks which students need to be able to accomplish through language. However, the revolution has only gone so far. The cultural implications of using language to communicate have often not been fully recognized. When a person begins to communicate a message in another language, s/he not only begins to exploit language functions, s/he begins to function within a cultural context. In fact s/he begins to participate in a culture.

Many of our current materials, while focusing on communicatively important language functions, present those functions within a cultural context which is often the culture of the learner, and in many cases within the school or university culture of the learner. In fact, many language text books written for foreign learners outside the country of the target language strive to be as relevant to the culture of the learner as possible (Kramsch 1993), often neglecting the target culture or separating it from the language material in the text. Text books written in the country of the target language, however, may contain much cultural material, but without making it explicit.

Language learners may therefore receive little input about the way the language which they are learning is used by native speakers, but when language learners use the target language to speak with native speakers, they immediately begin to participate in the target culture. The communicative approach equips learners with things to say, but it has usually not equipped them with the cultural knowledge they need in order to know what to say when and to whom. For example, a text book may give a series of forms for requesting in the target language, but may not provide information on the politeness level of these forms or the appropriate context in which such forms can be used. Faced with this lack of knowledge, the learner usually falls back on the only cultural knowledge s/he has – his/her own culture. Sometimes this helps, but sometimes it can lead into disaster. Things which can be appropriately said at a given point in a conversation in one culture may not be appropriately said in another culture at that point in a conversation.

The divergence between the materials which are used for language teaching and the actual ways of speaking used in the languages they teach can be seen in examining some specific examples of interactions in which language learners are likely to be involved. In many cases, the text books simply do not consider the necessity for indicating different cultural perspectives of common language-based activities such as beginning or ending a conversation. For example, Crozet (1995) has shown that available text books for tertiary level French students are very limited in the amount of information they give about the patterns of interaction in French. However, the problem is much more general.

## Text books and the socio-cultural components of 'simple' language

It is the argument of this paper that even very simple language has the potential to reflect cultural differences between languages. However, text books tend to ignore the possibilities for differences. In some cases, texts are pruned of information which is not felt to be relevant to the point under discussion – this is particularly the case with opening and closing sequences in dialogues. In other cases, they present the information in such a way as it distorts actual practices or they present an oversimplified picture of practices in conversation which conceals the potential for difference. We can see these factors at work in the ways in which greeting and farewelling are presented in text books for French and Spanish. In each case, the picture presented by the text book is not an accurate reflection of conversational practice in the language.

## Starting a conversation in French

Beginning a conversation is a very important activity and one which establishes clear first impressions in encounters with new people. It involves much more than just saying "hello", as there are a number of rituals about when to say "hello", making eye contact with your interlocutor, and what else you say which are important in beginning to talk. The beginning of a conversation is an important part of the conversation, and talk here establishes an interaction in a way which may be pleasant or unpleasant. Also, the talk carried out in conversational openings is quite highly structured (see for example Schegloff 1986). It is therefore particularly important that students who are learning another language learn the appropriate ways to begin a conversation in the target language culture.

There are some striking differences between the ways that conversations get started in French and in Australian English, and learning to begin a telephone conversation is something which is introduced quite early in language text books. In a typical beginners' text in French such as that which is shown in Figure 1 (*Espaces 1*, Capelle and Gidon 1990), the student is given a brief introduction to telephone conversations in French.

15 Au téléphone.
Jouez le dialogue avec un(e) autre étudiant(e).
ALLO! C'EST BIEN LE 45.48.52.52?
NON, ICI C'EST LE 45.48.53.52
OH, PARDON! C'EST UNE ERREUR
CE N'EST RIEN
45.48.52.52... ALLO! C'EST BIEN LE 45.48.52.52?
OUI, C'EST BIEN ÇA. QUI EST À L'APPAREIL?
LUIS GARCIA.
AH, C'EST TOI, LUIS! BONJOUR

**Figure 1:** Telephone opening in *Espaces 1*

In this text there are two conversations. In the first conversation there is a wrong number. The conversation begins with the caller saying *allo* the French word for answering a telephone followed by an enquiry about the number. The answerer gives his correct number and the caller apologizes. In the second call, the caller begins with a number, then says *allo* and checks the number. This time it is the correct number and so the answerer asks who is calling, the caller gives his name and the answerer recognizes him. Even though the people do not recognize each other initially, it can be seen that they are friends because the answerer calls the caller *tu*, the familiar form of 'you'. In this conversation, there are a number of problems, the most



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important being that it is the caller who speaks first. This is not what happens in English, and the question can be raised about whether or not this text is providing information about a cultural difference in French. The study of telephone openings (Liddicoat 1995) suggests that this is not typical. The usual beginning of a telephone call in French has the form given below.

C: Caller

A: Answerer

((ring))

A: *allo*

C: *oh Yves,*

A: *ouais*

C: *c'est Valérie*

A: *ah bon↑jour Valérie.*

C: *bonjour*

A: *ça va?*

C: *ouais ça va et toi?*

A: *ouais*

C: *je te dérange?*

A: *ben non*

C: *dis, je veux savoir …*

A: *hello*

C: *oh Yves,*

A: *yeah*

C: *it's Valérie*

A: *ah he↑llo Valérie*

C: *hello*

A: *how are you?*

C: *okay and how about you?*

A: *okay*

C: *am I bothering you?*

A: *no*

C: *well, I want to know…*

(Source: Barraja-Rohan 1994)

What can be seen here is a conversation between two people who know each other, but who are not sure if they are speaking to the right person. It can also be seen that it is the answerer who says *allo* here not the caller, just as in English. Then the caller checks the name to see if it is really Yves she is talking to, he says it is and then Valérie identifies herself. After that they ask how each other are and then proceed to the telephone conversation. The text book example has not shown any of these features, but instead gives a misleading picture of the nature of telephone openings in French – one which will not be useful for the learner to follow when talking with native-speaker friends.

There is more to starting a conversation than just saying hello. Significant differences exist between French and English in many of the ways in which interaction are begun. In her study of interaction between French and Australian employees in a multinational company in Australia Béal (1990) found that the situation was quite complex and that many interactions could break down at this fundamental stage.

The example given below is an example of an interaction between two Australians when one has to enter the office of the other.

| | |
|---|---|
| Typist: | ((at door)) *excuse me, Anna.* |
| Anna: | ((looks up)) |
| Typist: | ((walks in and shows papers)) |
| | *one?* |

(Source: Béal 1990)

What can be seen here is a situation in which Anna is in her office with the door open. The typist wants to make a query about the text she is typing. She stops at the doorway and attracts Anna's attention. When she is acknowledged, the typist walks up to her and begins to speak. This example can now be compared with an example involving two French people doing the same thing.

| | |
|---|---|
| Denis: | ((looks up as Catherine walks into office)) |
| Catherine: | *est-ce qu'il faut faire taper le rapport?* |
| | Should I get the report typed? |

(Source: Béal 1990)

Here a different set of principles is involved although the situation is the same. Denis is in his office with the door open and Catherine wants to talk to him about some typing. In this case, Catherine walks into the office without attracting Denis' attention, and Denis looks up as he notices her come in. After this Catherine begins to talk. In this example there is a very different set of rules about how to treat an open doorway (walk in or not walk in) and who is responsible for noticing the other (in French the person approached has to notice the person approaching, but in English the person approaching has to get the attention of the person being approached).

When people from different cultures meet, these conflicting rules cause problems. For an Australian, an office is personal space and the open door represents a barrier which people can only cross once permission has been given. To enter an office without such permission is an invasion of personal space and is viewed negatively in the culture. Therefore, if you want

to enter an office in an Australian cultural context, you have to seek permission to enter, and this takes the form of attracting the attention of the person who occupies the office. Because the office is a contained space, this means that the area beyond the office represents a different space and the occupier of the office has no reason to pay attention to people outside the office, even if they are visible. In the French cultural context, however, an office is part of the common work environment and so an open door is not a barrier. Instead, the open door makes the office a part of the shared space of the workers in the company. Also, when a French person notices that there is someone in the same space as him/her, s/he should make eye contact with this person. It would be rude not to do so. As the doorway to an office is not a barrier, the occupier of the office should acknowledge people who enter his/her field of vision as soon as they do so, even if they are outside the office area. It can be seen in these two examples that there is a culturally different way of understanding how space is organized and that this understanding affects the ways in which people interact.

## Saying "goodbye" in Spanish

An important, and often difficult, part of any conversation is the closing. In any conversation, there is more to ending the talk than just saying "goodbye". Closings have to be negotiated so that all of the participants feel happy to end the conversation and so that none of the people involved is felt to be impolite or unfriendly (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). In short, there are appropriate times to say goodbye and there are appropriate ways of saying goodbye.

The introductory Spanish text book, *Dos Mundos* (Terrell, Andrade, Egasse and Muñoz 1990a), gives only the information shown in Figure 2 about saying goodbye in Spanish.

**LOS SALUDOS Y LAS DESPEDIDAS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| –Mucho gusto. | –¿Cómo está usted? | Hasta luego. |
| –Igualmente. | –Muy bien gracias. | |

**Figure 2:** Opening and closing a conversation in *Dos Mundos*

The text book provides just a single lexical item which equate with 'goodbye', although the list is far from complete. What the text book does not give is a description of the ways in which these words can be used. Obviously, the understanding that a language learner would get from such a text is that *hasta luego* is equal to English *goodbye*, and that they are used in similar ways in closing a conversation. In the workbook (Terrell, Andrade, Egasse and Muñoz 1990b), as an additional reading, the following information is given:

> Cuando una persona se va, también es costumbre despedirse dandoles la mano a todos otra vez y diciendo por ejemplo, «Adíos», «Nos vemos», «Gusto de verte» o «Hasta mañana». Los saludos y las despedidas pueden durar mucho tiempo, pero valen la pena. ¡Muchos hispanos creen que las relaciones humanas son más importantes que el tiempo!

[When a person leaves, it is also customary to say goodbye by shaking hands with everyone once again and saying for example "Goodbye", "We'll meet again", "Good to see you", "See you tomorrow". Greetings and farewells can last for a long time, but they are worth the effort. Many Hispanic people believe that human relations are more important than time.]

(Terrell, Andrade, Egasse and Muñoz 1990b:42)

The work book gives some additional information compared with the text book, such as the importance of shaking hands when leaving, and also a number of new vocabulary items to fill the goodbye slot. It indicates that the process of farewelling may take a large amount of time, and also gives a cultural basis for this. What is highlighted here is the amount of time spent saying goodbye. This description is actually quite a contrast to the wave and *hasta luego* shown by the text book.

With this in mind, consider the following conversation, recorded at a wedding reception in Bogotá, Colombia (Fitch 1991). The conversation is between a guest and the two hosts. The hosts are brothers and the reception is held in their home. They do not know the guest. The guest wants to go home. What could be simpler than saying goodbye at the end of a party? Here is the actual conversation.

G: Guest
H1: First Host
H2: Second Host

G: *me voy.*
H1 *se va? por qué?*
G: *la tarjetica decía muy clara*mente que de 7
*a 10 y ya son las 10:30.*
H2: *pero que va, yo hasta las cinco*
*y m[edia de la mañ]a]na estoy aqui=*
G: *[ heh heh heh ]*
G: *=pero me tengo que ir=*
H1: *=hmf, que se tiene que ir. y por que.*
G: *por que vivo le[jos ]*
H2: *[pero] no impor::ta*
H1: *hmf. dizque me voy así no*
*m[ás, me voy ]*
G: *[heh heh ha ha ha ha]*
*(0.3)*
*pero es tengo que salir a coger bus=*

H2: *=no, no, luego le lle[vemos]*

H1: *[to:me ] se*

*otro traguito [ mano ]*

H2: *[o se va] con*

*Alberto que vive por alla y tiene carro*

G: *I'm leaving.*

H1 *you're leaving? why?*

G: *the little card ((invitation)) said very clearly*

*from 7 to 10 and it's now 10:30.*

H2: *but so what, I'll be here until five*

*th[irty in the morn]ing*

G: *[ heh heh heh ]*

G: *=but I have to go=*

H1: *=hmf, that you have to go. and why.*

G: *because I live [far away]*

H2: *[but that] doesn't matter*

H1: *hmf. says he's going just like*

*[ that, I'm going ]*

G: *[heh heh ha ha ha ha]*

*(0.3)*

G: *but it's that I have to go catch a bus=*

H2: *no, no later [we'll take] you*

H1: *[ ha:ve ] another*

*little drink [brother]*

H2: *[ or go ] with Alberto*

*who lives out there and has a car* (Fitch 1991)

After this conversation the guest returned to the party and remained there for another hour before finally leaving.

To someone operating in an English cultural framework, this would appear to be a very uncomfortable situation. The guest wants to leave, the hosts are preventing him and denying the guest the right to decide for himself when it is time to go. In an English environment, this sort of behaviour may be acceptable for people who know each other well, but for total strangers it is most unusual.

In the Colombian cultural context, this is not an unpleasant conversation. This is a friendly exchange, and not only that, it is a typical exchange when leaving a party. In the transcription,

the conversation proceeds rapidly, the utterances are latched on to each other without pausing or hesitation, or else they overlap. If this were uncomfortable, then we would expect indications of this, such as hesitations and pauses, from all or participants or from the guest at least. Moreover the guest is laughing when his reasons are denied and that the laughter is pre-emptive – it is a response to a guess about where the turn was going. Pre-emptive laughter is typical of a response to humour (Scherzer 1985, Sacks 1978). These sorts of features of this segment of talk show us that this is not a confrontation. What can be seen here is a typical ritualized utterance which occurs during leave-taking at a party. Its equivalent in English would be something like:

G: *I have to go now*

H: *well it was nice of you to come*

G: *thanks for a wonderful party*

What can be seen happening here are two different culturally based sets of rules about what is appropriate behaviour when leaving a social gathering. For speakers who know these rules the interactions flow in acceptable and friendly ways, for those who do not know the rules each of these interactions allows the possibility for serious misunderstandings. I will return to this potential conflict later, but first let us examine the rules which underlie the Colombian closing sequence. Fitch (1991) describes the routine as being made up of a four part sequence in which each part performs a specific function in achieving the entire routine:

1. Guest announces an intention to leave
2. Host asks for an account of this behaviour
3. Guest provides an account
4. Host denies the account and/or offers an alternative.

This is played out as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. G announces intention | *me voy.* |
| 2. H asks for an account | *se va? por qué?* |
| 3. G provides account | *la tarjetica decía muy claramente* |
| | *que de 7 a 10 y ya son las 10:30.* |
| 4. H denies account | *pero que va, yo hasta las cinco y* |
| | *m[edia de la mañ]ana estoy aqui=* |
| G: | *[ heh heh heh ]* |

This routine is then repeated:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. G announces intention | *=pero me tengo que ir=* |
| 2. H asks for an account | *=hmf, que se tiene que ir.* |
| | *y por que.* |
| 3. G provides account | *por que vivo le[jos ]* |
| 4a. H denies account | *[pero] no impor::ta* |
| 4b. H denies account | *hmf. dizque me voy así no* |
| | *m[ás, me voy ]* |
| G: | *[heh heh ha ha ha ha]* |

In these examples the guest's laughter comes at the end of each completion of the sequence. These two sequences are followed by an incomplete third repetition of the sequence:

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. G provides account | *pero es tengo que salir a coger bus=* |
| 4a. H denies account | *=no, no, luego le lle[vemos]* |
| 4b. H provides alternative | *[ to:me ]* |
| | *se otro traguito [ mano ]* |
| 4c. H provides alternative | *[o se va] con* |
| | *Alberto que vive por alla y tiene carro* |

What can be seen here is a definable sequence, with recognizable stages which the participants proceed through in order to accomplish the purposes of the talk. This routine is part of the talk you go through in order to leave and it is a leave-taking, but with different rules from leave-taking in English. Firstly, you cannot leave without going through this ritual as it would be considered rude. Moreover, leaving immediately after this ritual would also be considered impolite. The usual time to leave is about an hour after having expressed your intention to your host and having yielded to his/her argument that you should not go. In addition, it would be considered impolite if the host did not try to dissuade the guest from leaving as the denial shows interest in the guest. To omit this would indicate boredom or antagonism – it would mean that the hosts had not really wanted the guest at the party at all (Fitch 1991). It is quite simply that the elements in this sequence which to English eyes show the most confrontation in Colombian eyes show friendliness. "Hosts vigorously oppose guests' leaving whether or not they have a sincere interest in the guests' remaining" (Fitch 1991:220).

The English leave-taking given above also presents a possibility for misunderstanding. It has the form:

1. Guest announces intention to leave
2. Host expresses regret
3. Guest thanks host
4. Both parties close the conversation and guest leaves.

For a Colombian, this sequence would appear to be most impolite, as it expresses a negative attitude toward the guest and also a negative attitude from the guest who does not wish to continue to enjoy the host's hospitality.

## What do we need to teach?

The situation shown here with the Colombian leave-taking ritual is an extreme example.. However, there are many situations in everyday life in which the sequencing of talk shows culturally determined practices. Take for example:

- How do you start a conversation?
- What do you say when someone asks you "Did you have a good weekend"?
- What are the functions of questions such as "How are you"? Are they legitimate questions about the state of one's health or are they used as ritualized utterances? In either case, what are culturally appropriate things to say in this position?
- What do you say at the end of a conversation to show that it is time to end but which lets

your interlocutor know that you are not trying to escape? When is it "safe" to end a conversation?

- How do you change the topic so you can talk about what you want to talk about but not upset the person you're talking to?
- How do you get to tell a story or a joke?
- Can you interrupt? How do you interrupt? Where do you interrupt? In French an interruption which is co-operative (that is it is about the same idea/proposition) is a sign of interest, in other languages it may be perceived differently (cf. Kerbrat-Orrechioni 1993).

It is vitally important that learners of a language learn at least some of these things. These are the sorts of things they need to know if native speakers are going to consider them interesting and appropriate partners in talk. Language users who can control some of these things will have satisfying encounters with native speakers, those who don't will have difficulties or negative experiences in talking with native speakers. If culture is seen as linked to everyday conversation, we can get to a level of culture which can make or break an interaction. If language learners understand the cultural rules that others use, they can have satisfying interactions in the target language; if they do not understand them, then they are likely to be involved in situations in which polite behaviour is interpreted as impolite and friendliness as unfriendliness – guaranteeing a negative experience of the target culture, its people and its language. This does not mean that learners are to be assimilated into the target culture, rather they have to find their own third position between the two cultures involved (Kramsch 1993, Crozet, Liddicoat and Lo Bianco 1997). As such, it is the learners' choice to decide how much of the culture they will use in constructing this third position. However, in terms of language teaching, the learners need information about the culture in order to construct their identity. It is not vital that learners' language production is nativelike in this sense. It is vital that their perception is informed by native speaker norms. The language learner needs to understand what native speakers mean when they use the language, even if they do not choose to replicate native speakers' behaviour.

Any contribution to talk achieves an effect and this effect is interpretable by other participants. However, what effect is achieved by any particular contribution may vary from language to language. That is, not all structurally similar utterances are interactionally similar. All utterances do something in conversation and we achieve our identity in our own eyes and in the eyes of others by what we do in conversation (Sacks 1984). While it is not appropriate in language teaching to require learners to be someone they are not, nonetheless learners need to know the consequences of the interactional choices they make. Language learners need to know what communicative effect their talk is likely to produce and how they will be perceived by native speakers of the language. If they choose not to adopt native speaker-like norms, this needs to be an informed choice.

In order for learners to understand the interactional consequences of their verbal behaviour, we need to know more about how speakers of languages structure their talk. We also need to know what people actually do with their language, not what they think they do, as many of the culturally loaded aspects of language use can be deeply ingrained and unconscious. As such we need to use naturally occurring data and detailed micro-level analyses, which allow us to see exactly what is going on in a speech situation, if we are to describe the cultural conventions which make up this particular aspect of conversational interaction. What such

study would show, then, is the nature of the rules of language which underlie an encounter. It would give us a grammar of the speech event and allow us to work out how utterances are functioning within the speech event to achieve the goals of the participants.

The rules which apply in speaking a second language cannot be 'picked up' by the language learner unless s/he has extensive exposure to the target culture. Even then some aspects of culture such as closing a conversation may be difficult to pick up. Language learners need to be exposed explicitly to the cultural rules which govern speaking in the target language (Crozet 1996). The cultural basis of talking, the norms of interaction, need to be incorporated into language programs in a systematic way, just as other aspects of communication need to be incorporated. If the language teaching profession is serious about teaching language communicatively, second language learners need to be equipped with conversational skills to interact successfully with native speakers. Information from the study of conversational rules provides a central link between language and socio-cultural norms. This link can form the basis for materials and program designs which incorporate this aspect of language into the second language program.

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# Teaching conversation and sociocultural norms with conversation analysis[1]

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## Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show how conversational English and sociocultural norms can be taught in an ESL/EFL context and have been taught successfully in adult ESL classes by utilising the findings of Conversation Analysis as well as aspects of pragmatics. In so doing, a new methodology to teach conversation has emerged which has been the result of three years of classroom-based research (for more detail, see Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard 1995a, 1995b). This new methodology has been encapsulated in a coursebook, *Beyond Talk*, (Barraja-Rohan and Pritchard 1997),which is designed for adult learners at lower intermediate to upper intermediate levels.

This paper will be structured as follows. First, I will give a definition of conversation and outline the reasons why we need to teach it. Second, I will give a rationale for the creation of the coursebook by explaining how some difficulties in teaching conversation can be dealt with and by looking at what is involved in conversation. Lastly, I will explore the teaching methodology and what needs to be taught.

## Why do we need to teach conversation?

We need to teach conversation simply because conversation is an everyday and pervasive phenomenon. Conversation takes the form of a spoken interaction between participants. It has a social purpose as ordinary or casual conversation "is the predominant medium of interaction in the social world" as Drew and Heritage put it (1992:19). Drew and Heritage (1992) go on to say that ordinary conversation constitutes the base of all kinds of spoken interaction such as what is called institutional talk. Institutional talk is characterised by spoken interactions that take place in a formal setting like schools, hospitals, government offices, and so on and includes service encounters. Therefore, we need to thoroughly understand ordinary or casual conversation and be able to use it to operate effectively in society. This is why it is imperative for second language learners to be familiar with the intricacies of ordinary conversation so they can have access to the target language community and become social participants in that community.

## What is at play in conversation?

Conversation is not just an exchange of words. It also involves body language (ie. kinesics) such as facial expressions, head movements, and gestures, as well as proxemics or distance between conversationalists, prosody such as rhythm, intonation, pitch and sentence stress, and finally norms of interaction which operate at the unconscious level. All the paralinguistics mentioned above as well as the norms of interaction can be culture specific and often are. According to Crozet (1996) the norms of interaction which require special attention in language teaching are those which have highly culturally specific components, so I shall refer to them as sociocultural norms. These sociocultural norms are found for instance in openings and closings, turn-taking and the use of silence, making, accepting and rejecting an invitation, and so on. It is because of the above that Conversation Analysis is especially useful in teaching conversation as to quote Button and Lee (1987):

> Conversation Analysis is concerned [with studying] the social organisation of natural language-in-use. The concern is with the study of the activities or doings of conversationalists and with the means whereby they achieve order and organisation where they may be observed to have so achieved it.
> (Button and Lee 1987:2)

In conversation, the relationship between participants (that is social distance and status), their intentions and the external context in which the interaction is held also play a part. Conversation Analysis does not concern itself with all of this but pragmatics does, in particular politeness theory as formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). So, I would like to include as part of the sociocultural norms the notion of politeness which can be viewed from two angles: positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is roughly the expression of solidarity, whereas negative politeness is roughly the expression of restraint, of not imposing.

## Rationale for creating a coursebook to teach conversation

ESL teachers have expressed a number of concerns in teaching conversation, and *Beyond Talk* has been developed to address the difficulties outlined in the following sections. These difficulties tend to result from the lack of a theoretical framework and the fact that conversation is a complex phenomenon, a complexity not always fully appreciated in the field of education.

### Lack of theoretical framework

The teaching of conversation is not generally based on a particular theoretical framework but rather on the teaching of conversational strategies and/or the use of communicative activities which often result in the language teacher having an *ad hoc* approach. Because the ESL teacher is not given a firm direction as to what needs to be taught in spoken interaction, teaching conversation is often equated with making students talk. Therefore, s/he tends to rely on a range of communicative activities such as role-plays, games, etc. and her/his own imagination, as well as a selection of activities from various coursebooks, which is not always a satisfactory teaching methodology. Conversation is very complex and usually coursebooks do not provide a detailed explanation and description of the phenomena of spoken interaction which Conversation Analysis succeeds in capturing. As a result, the language teacher may find

teaching conversation a daunting and perplexing task; as one of my colleagues commented: "I don't want to teach conversation, I wouldn't know where to start."

### Making students talk

Another difficulty faced by the ESL teacher is how to make students talk especially when the teacher has tried a number of activities and has run out of ideas. By talking about conversational features and placing them in a cross-cultural perspective (which is dealt with in more detail below), teachers will no longer be confronted with this problem.

### The aim of the coursebook

The coursebook to teach conversation is based on the findings of Conversation Analysis but also takes pragmatics into account. It intends to explicate what conversation is about, by looking at the following:

- How conversation is orderly,
- How conversation is structured and organised,
- How utterances are sequentially placed,
- In what sort of context spoken interactions are taking place and how context is created by participants,
- What language conversationalists use (spoken grammar and idioms), how they interact, what activities they perform, and how they orient their talk to each other,
- What the relationship of the participants is, and how this influences their interaction,
- What sociocultural norms are used,
- How language and culture are interrelated,
- What paralinguistic features are used and what function they fulfill in the interaction.

## Teaching conversation: a complex process

### Teaching conversation as opposed to just getting students to talk

The aim of the conversation class is more often than not to make students talk. However, just getting students to talk is not teaching them conversation. It is simply providing students with an opportunity to talk but no teaching of conversation is taking place. Students may be learning from using English but in doing so they are not taught how conversation works and how participants manage talk-in-interaction. They are doing no more than practising their English. Sometimes students are given conversational strategies, but what are these conversational strategies and how do they help second language learners make sense of a talk-in-interaction? It seems to me that these conversational strategies are only useful in the case of repair and do not help to understand the interaction. These conversational strategies will be dealt with later.

### Focus on spoken grammar as opposed to written grammar

Often in the conversation class, the focus is mainly on linguistic form, but not necessarily on the grammar of spoken English which needs to be looked at and distinguished from written grammar. L2 learners should be made aware that there is such a thing as a grammar of spoken English which is different from written grammar. McCarthy and Carter (1995) advocate the

teaching of spoken grammar and show that naturally occurring conversation has distinct syntactic features compared with written English. For instance, there is ellipsis of the subject, predicate and auxiliary as in "dunno", "not a problem", "never heard of it", "wanna come?", etc. In teaching conversation, we aim to make L2 learners sound natural and not like a book, as this can be alienating. According to McCarthy and Carter (1995) students should be given a grammatical choice and informed that "certain grammatical forms, revealed by corpus-based scrutiny of spoken English, enable a greater degree of interpersonal and interactive language uses ..." (McCarthy and Carter 1995:207).

### Focus on meaning and interaction as opposed to accuracy

The focus on the linguistic features of written grammar tends to become the only point of correction, neglecting the conversational features related to the interaction. Indeed, focussing simply on written-grammar accuracy ignores the fact that participants in talk-in-interaction also look for meaning rather than just grammatical accuracy. In fact, Conversation Analysis reveals that native-speakers also make a number of linguistic errors (which are performance errors) in the course of their interaction yet the participants are able to carry on their conversation. If the message conveyed by one of the participants is unclear, conversationalists have resources to deal with such communication problems through the use of repairs. There are different kinds of repairs, such as self-initiated self-repaired, other-initiated self-repaired or other-repaired etc, the first of these being the preferred type of repair and the latter two often taught as conversational strategies.

## Teaching conversation using conversation analysis and aspects of pragmatics

To be able to teach conversation to second language learners as described in this paper, students must have achieved a minimum language level. For our own purposes, they need to have acquired the basic structures of the language before they are ready to look at spoken interaction in more detail. So we shall target the conversation class to lower-intermediate (ASLPR 1) and upwards. It must be noted that Conversation Analysis is used as the main framework for the coursebook and elements of pragmatics are included to explain politeness and the relationship between participants.

### Teaching real life language

One primary concern in teaching language and especially conversation is the question of transferability of skills and knowledge. In other words, we want to make sure that what we teach is going to be used by students once they step into the real world. If we use authentic or unscripted conversations and teach naturally occurring language, that is the language that conversationalists use in an ordinary everyday conversation, students will be better prepared for what they find outside the classroom. If what we teach is real life, then students will be able to transfer that knowledge into the real world. Widdowson (1978) raises this issue of transfer of ability, distinguishing between language in use or communicative language and usage or grammatical rules when he says:

> It is likely to be easier to extend a knowledge of use into new situations and other kinds of discourse than it is to transfer a knowledge of usage, no matter how extensive, to an ability to use this knowledge in the actual business of communication.
>
> (Widdowson 1978:17)

This point further reinforces the need to teach what is spoken in the street as opposed to an idealised and reconstructed version of language in use. This is another reason why Conversation Analysis is so pertinent in second or foreign language teaching because it only examines naturally occurring conversations and looks at the organisation of these and the social activities that take place.

### The choice of topics in a multi-ethnic class: adopting a cross-cultural perspective

Selecting topics can be a headache in a multi-ethnic classroom. A number of issues arise such as: which topics are appropriate for the whole class, which ones are too sensitive, will students feel concerned by the topic selected, and will the topic be relevant to their needs? The cross-cultural perspective deals with these problems as students discuss the conversational features and the sociocultural norms studied in class in relation to both the target language and their L1. The following illustrates how the cross-cultural perspective addresses the issues mentioned above.

The cross-cultural perspective is concerned with highlighting cultural differences in conversational styles and norms of interaction between different cultures. However, it also gives L2 students an awareness not just of the divergences but also the similarities that may exist between the sociocultural norms of their own culture and those of the target language culture, and how the sociocultural norms are mapped onto the language. My own observations of L2 learners have shown that students do not always realise this kind of positive transfer into the target language.

Approaching conversation from a cross-cultural perspective gives students an opportunity to explore their own cultural identity and explain to some degree why they operate the way they do. It also shows respect for students' cultural entity and enables second language learners to be valued for their differences. Students are always willing to contribute to this type of discussion as it is a matter that directly concerns them and is particularly relevant to their needs, since learners at some stage will have to interact with native-speakers of English. Moreover, the cross-cultural perspective may unveil some of the reasons for the communication difficulties students may have encountered, and they usually take this opportunity to relate incidents or stories that illustrate a point covered in the lesson.

I would like to stress that in highlighting cultural differences both Conversation Analysis and pragmatics are used, particularly the politeness theory elaborated by Brown and Levinson (1987), which has proved very helpful for more advanced learners (that is learners at ASLPR 2 and above).

## Teaching methodology

The teaching methodology has an iterative structure as the approach is exploratory and students are able to continuously refine their understanding of the concepts taught (refer to Figure 1). In the awareness raising phase, concepts drawn from Conversation Analysis are first observed

from authentic or unscripted videoed conversations then explained. In the reflective phase, students discuss the concepts in relation to their experience of them in L2 as well as in L1, that is, how these concepts are or are not applied in their L1. At this point, the discussion becomes cross-cultural. In the experimental phase, students experience these concepts in pairs or small groups through role-plays or simulation activities.

As a result of this experimentation, students often discover new issues which may entail looking at new elements or concepts. These issues are raised during the introspective phase where an evaluation of students' conversations (or analysis if the conversations are videoed) is conducted. The new elements are then discussed, which leads to exploring further the concepts that were initially taught. In addition, in the experimental phase, students may produce a pragmatic transfer from their L1 onto English which is first identified and evaluated during the introspective phase (for more information on pragmatic transfer or failure, see Kasper 1995, 1998). Students then reflect on this by contrasting L1 sociocultural norms with those of L2. In the cultural evaluation phase which follows, the reasons for the mismatch between the sociocultural norms of L1 and L2 are explored; this can be achieved by looking at politeness theory and how politeness is mapped onto the language (see Figure 1).

## Conversational features and sociocultural norms to be taught

### Prosody

Prosody, that is intonation and sentence stress, needs to be taught as an integrated part of conversation. Prosody needs to be contextualised as it is an interactional phenomenon. Therefore, it cannot be studied in a dissected form away from the conversation from which it has been extracted. For instance, intonation is important on tag questions such as *right?*, feedback tokens, assessments and turntaking, and it reflects the speakers' feelings.

### Kinesics

Body language or kinesics cannot be ignored in the conversation class as most communication is done non-verbally. Gaze and head movements are significant and not always interpreted or used similarly across cultures. Not only must emblematic gestures be taken into account but also iconic ones, as both types of gestures help decipher an interaction. Emblematic gestures are "culture specific and substitutes for words" or idioms according to Poyatos (1988:98)– gestures such as waving the hand to say goodbye – whereas iconic gestures are shaped in relation to what is being said (see Schegloff 1984).

### Feedback tokens and assessments

Feedback tokens such as *yeah* and *right* and assessments such as *fantastic, great, that's bad*, etc are important as they point to the listener role in the interaction. Intonation on these is crucial to understanding their varied functions, particularly in the case of feedback tokens (see Gardner 1995a, 1995b).

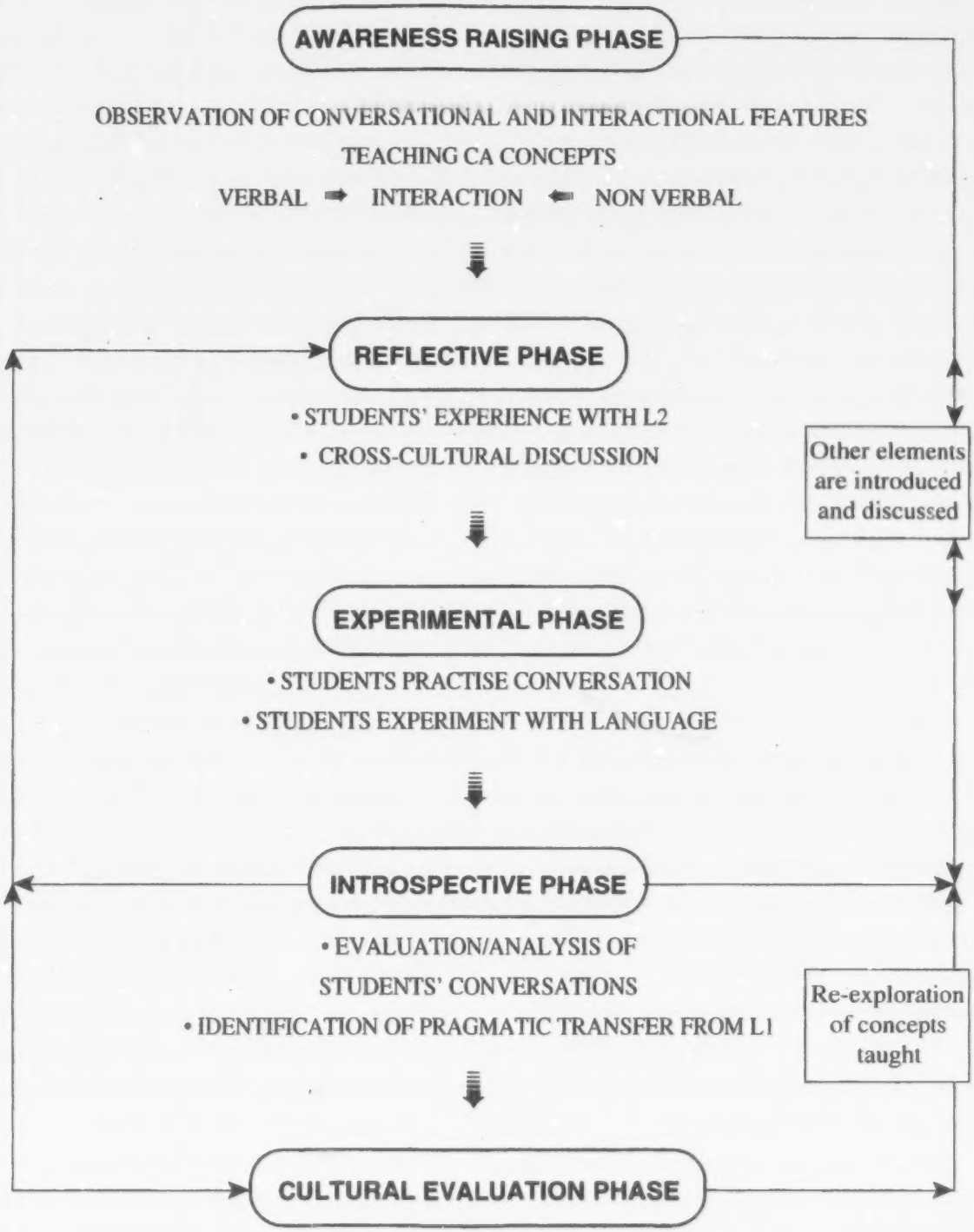
AWARENESS RAISING PHASE
OBSERVATION OF CONVERSATIONAL AND INTERACTIONAL FEATURES
TEACHING CA CONCEPTS
VERBAL ➡ INTERACTION ⬅ NON VERBAL
REFLECTIVE PHASE
• STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE WITH L2
• CROSS-CULTURAL DISCUSSION
Other elements are introduced and discussed
EXPERIMENTAL PHASE
• STUDENTS PRACTISE CONVERSATION
• STUDENTS EXPERIMENT WITH LANGUAGE
INTROSPECTIVE PHASE
• EVALUATION/ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' CONVERSATIONS
• IDENTIFICATION OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFER FROM L1
Re-exploration of concepts taught
CULTURAL EVALUATION PHASE

**Figure 1:** Teaching methodology

## Teaching functions through the notions of adjacency pair and preference organisation

Adjacency pairs form an exchange in which the second part of the exchange (called the second pair part) is conditional upon the first part (called the first pair part) and is normally placed contiguously. Examples of adjacency pairs are greeting followed by greeting, request followed by grant or refusal and leave-taking followed by leave-taking. The notion of adjacency is useful because it helps to predict what should come next, since adjacency pairs are sequentially placed. However, if the second pair part of the adjacency pair is not provided then its absence indicates that there is something wrong in the interaction. Where the next action is something other than the second pair part, this next action may indicate something which needs to be dealt with before the second pair part can be provided.

The notion of 'adjacency pair' provides an explanation for the use of linguistic functions which have traditionally been listed but not explained; the focus has mainly been linguistic and not interactional.

Teaching just a list of functions is not satisfying for either the learners or the language teacher as proceeding in this way decontextualises the social activity and does not provide an explanation of: 1) how functions occur sequentially in spoken interaction, 2) how they are shaped and used, which is revealing of the sociocultural norms at play, 3) how and why they can be embedded in a presequence, which also reflects the sociocultural norms used, such as a pre-invitation or a pre-request, and 4) how to recognise and interpret a missing second pair part.

Lastly, teaching a list of functions does not prepare students for the variability of language-in-use found outside the classroom. However, the notion of 'adjacency pair' captures all the above and enables students to analyse the interaction to find out what is really happening. In addition, it shows that some adjacency pairs can be multifunctional depending on the context as, for instance, the pair *Lovely meeting you/Lovely meeting you,* which can be used as part of an introduction or as a leave-taking at the end of a conversation where an introduction has taken place.

Moreover, adjacency pairs are closely related to the preference organisation system that governs conversation, which further enhances their structural significance in spoken interaction. Preference organisation shows that participants orient their talk in a particular way depending on whether the second pair part of an adjacency pair is a preferred or a dispreferred response. For instance, the preferred response for an invitation is acceptance whereas the dispreferred response is a rejection. Preferred and dispreferred responses have different turn shapes. A preferred response comes immediately after the first pair part and is normally short and structurally simple, whereas a dispreferred response often comes after a delay, is usually longer and structurally more complex. The concepts of 'adjacency pair' and 'preference organisation' are exemplified in the following excerpts taken from two videoed authentic conversations which are briefly analysed. The first excerpt is between two native-speakers of English:

## Apology

1. M: $why're you at Footscray now ¿$
2. (0.3)

*Apology: First pair part (FPP)* →

3. R: ↑we:ll , I came here to apologise↑
4. for not bringing back my book .

*Silence here. It is usually the sign of a dispreferred response.* →

5. (0.5)

*'oh↓' is a newsmarker and here it also prefaces a dispreferred response.* →

6. M: oh↓

*The second pair part (SPP) is not provided, so the apology has not been accepted as yet. Instead, this lack of a second pair part occasions an insertion sequence whereby M is trying to establish why R has not returned his book yet and why he got the reminder notice a week late.*

7. (0.3)
8. R: <I go[t a letter- ] I=
9. M: [(°>which book<°)]
10. R: =got a letter from you yesterday;
11. M: <right> ,
12. R: saying ;=
13. M: =you should've got it last week
14. actually ;=
15. R: =bec- was in my pige- >well it
16. might've been there last week
15. I found it in my pigeon-hole
16. <yesterday ;=
17. M: =<uh hu:h> ;
18. R: saying it was overdu:e ;=
19. M: =<ri:ght> ,=
20. R: =and I didn't even realise I'd
21. taken the book out of the
22. out of the SAC ;
23. (0.5)
24. M: <how could you> - =
25. R: ='cos this is my- hh it is my
26. coursebook .
27. (0.5)
28. <and I just assumed
29. I'[d bo]ught this coursebook
30. M: [↑a::h¿↑]
31. R: along with the other students'
32. ↑coursebooks ;=
33. M: =>yeah ,< =
34. R: =<so I opened up the back cover
35. and there is the- the SAC ; (.)
36. you know ¿=
37. M: =<ri:ght> ;=
38. R: =thing so I gave it
39. to [↓Andrew; (0.4)]=
40. M: [>the pocket (...)<]
41. R: =to give back ;=
42. M: =right ;

*M is still not satisfied with R's explanation so the interrogation continues. Indeed, R has not indicated which book he is talking about. It is only later that he mentions which book it is and that he has actually returned it at line 38-9*

*Once M understands the situation better, she wants to make sure that R has proceeded correctly in bringing his book back. She is concerned that the procedure of returning the book to the Self Access Centre may not have been respected, in which case it would mean extra work in retrieving the book or the possibility of losing the book, both of which she wants to avoid.*

*Laughter, a device often used in troubles-talk (see Jefferson 1984a). It's R who initiates it and who continues laughing while M reciprocates it only very briefly. This suggests that R is experiencing some discomfort, that there is a some problem.*

*End of the insertion sequence, line 65. Acceptance of the apology:the SPP is given. In saying that everything should be fine, R wants to reassure M that the procedure has been duly respected. At line 69, M shows that she is fully satisfied with the procedure of bringing the book back and has accepted the apology.*

43. R: ↓so you should've got it
44. back↓ .
45. M: er through Andrew ¿=
46. R: =yep ; ((clears throat))
47. M: haven't seen Andrew .
48. R: <well he may've put- I
49. think he just put it in
50. the- in the box .
51. (0.5)
52. M: ri:ght .=
53. R: =I hope so .=[he told m]e=
54. M: [hh hope]
55. R: =he $did$;(h)uh[(h)uh (h)uh]
56. M: [(h)uh(h)uh]
57. R: (h)uh (h)uh (h)uh (h)uh
58. [(h)uh (h)uh (h)uh (h)uh]
59. M: [I hope he took the car:d out]
60. of the loans' box ,
61. [and put it in the pocket¿]
62. R: [↑$I told him to put the]
63. car:d$ back in the back-=
64. M: =okay .=
65. R: =in the back of the book ;=
66. M: =okay .=
67. R: =↓I think everything
68. should be fine .↓=
69. M: =all right .=
70. R: =yes yes .

## Sociocultural norms: example of an invitation between non native speakers of English

The next excerpt comes from a conversation between three learners of English who were having a conversation in class. It is considered an authentic interaction as the students were not given any directives as to what they should talk about. At the start of the conversation, N (a Thai female student) introduces A (a new Swiss female student) to B (a Thai male student). I must add that N hardly knew A as the latter had just started an English course at the time of the conversation and certainly did not know B at all before the conversation.

The problem in this unsuccessful interaction is not really a lack of function, as A can issue an invitation even though it is not quite grammatical, but the lack of sociocultural norms. In effect, A has not respected the sociocultural norms attached to English because: 1) she did not try to establish some common ground with the two invitees; and 2) she did not make a pre-invitation whereby the availability of the invitees is checked before making her invitation. That the inviter creates some affinity with her invitees before inviting them is imperative. Indeed, its absence accounts for the lack of response to her invitation indicating that there is some kind of problem with her invitation which produced embarrassment in all participants.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1. | N: em we have program: we want |
| | | 2. | to- go to Switzerlan:d _= |
| | | 3. | A: =>ye:ah<;= |
| | | 4. | N: =can you give us some em |
| | | 5. | idea about Switzerland_ |
| | | 6. | <is it beautiful , |
| | | 7. | A: mm ; |
| | | 8. | N: all that , yeah _ |
| *Invitation: FPP* | → | 9. | A: ↑yeah I can do like that;= |
| | | 10. | will you come to me at |
| | | 11. | home¿↑ |
| *Silence is a sign of a dispreferred response, ie. a rejection (see Davidson 1984). No SPP is given so A hesitatingly reformulates her invitation.* | → | 12. | (0.9) ((B moves toward A)) |
| | | 13. | A: it- at- em at my home I have |
| | | 14. | em wery much prospect |
| | → | 15. | about Switzerland ; you |
| | | 16. | can come after this school |
| | | 17. | when we: _ |
| *The interturn gap is again prefacing a dispreferred response. The hesitation "u::h", followed by a hitch "tsk" and a filler "well" are all delay devices typical of a dispreferred response. No SPP is given in the following lines; the invitation is not taken up.* | → | 18. | (0.3) |
| | | 19. | B: u::h tsk well we just |
| | | 20. | plan to go there some- |
| | | 21. | [some where in the ↑future; |
| | | 22. | A: [hm mm . |
| | | 23. | B: mm hm , |
| | | 24. | A: mm hm , |

Other examples of norms of interaction which are are affected by socio-cultural differences include:

- **Turn-taking and overlaps.** Turn-taking can be culture specific in terms of interturn gaps (pauses between turns), which can vary across cultures and the amount of overlap tolerated in different cultures. Turntaking is also very much linked to intonation as, for example, a level intonation contour may indicate that a speaker has more to say, or a falling intonation on acknowledgment tokens such as *right* and *okay* can denote a pre-closing.

- **Openings and closings.** Openings and closings are also governed by sociocultural norms. In Australian English, a typical opening is done with a greeting immediately followed by a health inquiry which is usually not a genuine one. In saying *How are you*, native speakers are not, generally speaking, really interested in one's health and in most cases do not want a detailed account of one's state of health. This typical opening is not necessarily true for all cultures. Furthermore, in English, closings are usually done with a pre-closing which often involves, for instance, either assessments such as *great* or *good* and/or acknowledgment tokens such as *okay* or *right* pronounced with a falling intonation before participants take leave of each other (for more details on closings see Button 1987).

## Conclusion

Teaching conversation to L2 learners has traditionally taken the form of getting the students to talk. The new methodology outlined here draws on the findings of Conversation Analysis and aspects of pragmatics to incorporate both the critical features of spoken interaction and the sociocultural norms of interaction. Thus, this methodology provides the language teacher with a theoretical framework, a structure and a direction to teach conversation. It enables the language teacher to have a better understanding of the complexities of conversation and hence of the conversational features that need to be taught. Furthermore, it provides L2 learners with the means to analyse spoken interactions to make sense of what the interactants are doing, so that L2 learners can communicate more effectively in English. Knowing the sociocultural norms of the target language gives learners an entry point into the cultural attitude of that community. As the focus of the proposed methodology is not just linguistic but also interactional, students are better prepared to tackle new situations and cope with the language used outside the classroom. Finally, the approach used in the proposed methodology could also be applied to foreign language teaching to minimise the cultural shock often experienced when first interacting with speakers of the target language.

## Note

[1] Paper presented at the 1996 ACTA-ATESOL (NT) National Conference and the 7th TESOL In Teacher Education Conference.

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# Appendix

## Conversation analysis transcription

The conventions used in the transcriptions in relation to intonation contours are adapted from the Jefferson transcription system by Gardner (1995b). These conventions are:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| . | full fall | , | slight fall |
| _ | level | , | slight rise |
| ¿ | medium rise | ? | full rise |

The remaining items are the Jefferson conventions:

| | |
|---|---|
| = | latching indicates continuous stretch of talk |
| [ ] | indicates simultaneous talk |
| yea:h | the colon indicates lengthening of sound |
| nine o<u>clock</u> | the underline indicates sentence stress |
| - | the hyphen indicates abrupt cut off or glottal stop |
| °it's okay° | the degree sign indicates talk that is softer than the surrounding talk |
| °°species°° | the double degree sign indicates unvoiced talk |
| ↑ | indicates a shift in pitch going up |
| ↓ | indicates a shift in pitch going down |
| (.) | indicates a very short pause or micropause |
| (0.5) | indicates the length of the silence in seconds in relation to the surrounding talk |
| >anyway< | the signs > < indicate talk that is faster than the surrounding talk |
| < anyway | the sign < at the beginning indicates talk that starts quickly |
| <maybe> | the signs < > indicates talk that is slower than its surrounding talk |
| huh | indicates laughter |
| (h)uh | (h) indicates plosive quality |
| hh | h's indicate audible aspirations |
| $that's a pity$ | the $ sign indicates laughing while talking |
| ((clears throat)) | the double brackets indicate co-activity relevant to the interaction |
| ((.....)) | indicates talk that is not clearly audible |

*Sources:* Akinson and Heritage (1984), Gardner (1995) , Jefferson (1984b), Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), Schegloff (nd).

# Contrastive rhetoric and the teaching of writing: seven principles

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## Introduction

Since the publication in 1966 of Kaplan's seminal article 'Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education' in which he proposed that rhetorical patterns and the ways writers shape paragraphs and organise texts were culturally specific, a number of studies have been undertaken in an attempt to prove or disprove the proposition. Kaplan's paper stemmed from his analysis of a corpus of English compositions written by native speakers of languages other than English. The corpus showed that there were problems that seemed to be both systematic and unique to speakers of particular languages. For example, in a much quoted passage, he suggested that in some 'Oriental' writing the expository paragraph developed by "turning and turning in a widening gyre" (Kaplan 1966:10), but in English followed a linear sequence with a paragraph normally beginning with a topic statement which was then supported by examples or illustrations.

The motivation for this early work in Contrastive Rhetoric was pedagogic. "At this stage in the evolution of contrastive rhetoric there was no great interest in understanding the origins of the matters under study, rather, the interest was primarily in finding solutions to an immediate pedagogical problem" (Kaplan 1988:277). This also helps explain why these early studies in contrastive rhetoric focused on the English writing of these students rather than on their writing in their L1. This awakening of interest in Contrastive Rhetoric studies developed naturally from the interest and faith in Contrastive Analysis that had begun in the States in the late fifties and early sixties. Contrastive Analysis was based on the belief that linguistic differences between the target language and the first language would be difficult for students to learn and that similarities between the two languages would be easy for them. The first was called negative transfer, the second positive transfer so "What the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by contrastive analysis" (Banathy et al. 1996:37 and cited by Jackson 1981). Contrastive Rhetoric extended this to encompass rhetorical structure and viewed the student's problem in writing in a second language as one of negative transfer (Matsuda 1997). In summing up 25 years of Contrastive Rhetoric, Leki (1991) reports that it is in writing classes that Contrastive Rhetoric has been seen to have the greatest potential value.

Over the years, Contrastive Analysis has restricted its claims to being able solely to predict potential causes of student difficulty and error and Contrastive Rhetoric has similarly softened its claims. Nonetheless, it emerges clearly that writing is a culturally variable activity and successful writing in a language goes beyond a command of the grammar and lexicon of the language. In this chapter, we will investigate the potential uses of Contrastive Rhetoric in the teaching of writing by itemising a number of principles that need to be considered to ensure that the Contrastive Rhetoric is appropriately undertaken and its results appropriately used.

## Principles

### Principle 1: Rhetorical style in Language A can only be discovered by studying authentic texts in Language A

It was after studying the English writing of international students whose first language was not English that Kaplan proposed that writers of different languages structure texts in systematically different ways. He did not study texts written by those students in their first language. Hinds (1983), while acknowledging the importance of Kaplan's work, has argued that, in order to identify paragraph and text structures that are language specific, essays written in a particular language for an audience that speak that language should be analysed. Hinds' (1983) advice should become the first principle for all people engaged in the study of Contrastive Rhetoric.

It is dangerous to make assumptions about the way texts are structured in an L1 from studying L2 texts written by speakers of the L1. We would, I think, be suspicious of the findings of a Chinese scholar who claimed, on the strength of analysing the Chinese writing of English-speaking students, that 'Anglo' styles of rhetoric were evident in the Chinese writing of the students. Kaplan's 1966 article has met with much criticism on this score. For example, Mohan and Lo (1985) provide evidence that not all Chinese writing is circular. They give an example of a deductive paragraph taken from the *Analects* and quote several Chinese books on composition in which students are taught the importance of each paragraph containing a main idea. For the same reason, we must be cautious of Kaplan's (1972) claim that a traditional Chinese essay style, the so-called eight-legged essay, still exerts an influence on the writing in English of Chinese students (Kirkpatrick 1997).

More recently, Kaplan (1987) has stated that he now believes that all of the models of paragraph development that he identified in his 1966 article are possible in each language but that each language has a clear preference. Languages and their writers are versatile and can use different rhetorical patterns for different communicative purposes. An example of this operating at the level of sentence can make this clear. In Modern Standard Chinese, for example, the normal unmarked clause order in complex sentences is subordinate clause before main clause, while the opposite sequence is the preferred sequence in English (Kirkpatrick 1996). Chinese, however, can employ a main to subordinate sequence and English can employ a subordinate to main sequence. The decision writers take upon which sequence to use will depend on variables such as the communicative effect they wish to achieve or which aspect of an argument they wish to highlight. It would be very hard to detect this natural versatility of language simply by analysing texts written in the students' L2. Authentic texts in the relevant

language must be studied to discover how writers of languages employ rhetorical structures.

## Principle 2: Contrast like with like

Literacy is complex, diverse and culturally influenced. Even within a defined discourse community such as a university, text types are characterised by their diversity. Bernstein (1977) defines an academic discipline as a set of practices through which students learn to work within a received frame. One discipline is distinguished from another by using a different set of practices. Cross-disciplinary differences have been well-documented (Becher 1989) and there are several levels of disciplinary dialects operating in a university (Taylor 1978). Discourse communities are exceedingly complex. As Scollon argues, an individual has to learn how to communicate and find an identity "within a matrix of . . . multiple and competing systems of discourse" (Scollon 1996:10). This complexity is mirrored in all cultures. Liddicoat (1997a), for example, has shown that there are marked differences in style between French literary and scientific texts.

It is therefore important to establish complementarity between the text being studied in the L1 and the use of that type of text in the L2 if the aim is to use the results of the Contrastive Rhetoric for pedagogic purposes. We need to be sure that we are comparing like with like and to be aware, as we shall see below, that particular text types and styles may have different uses in different cultures.

## Principle 3: Texts are written by people for people

In the potentially rather dry work of the analysis of texts, it is all too easy to forget that texts are written by people and for people. Those working in the field of Contrastive Rhetoric must first remember that individual writers can imbue any text with a personal and idiosyncratic style, and second that all texts are written for an audience of one sort or another and that the audience can play a role in the shaping of any text.

> Argumentation is a social, intellectual, verbal activity serving to justify or refute an opinion, consisting of a constellation of statements and directed towards obtaining the approbation of an audience.
>
> (Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Kruiger 1987:7).

An important audience variable concerns the relative status of the writer and the audience. This was aptly summarised by Laswell some fifty years ago:

> When non democratic attitudes prevail in a community, initiatives from below are phrased in a somewhat laboured language. Elaborate words and gestures are used by a subordinate to show that he is not presuming to transgress the prerogatives of his superior. By contrast with the self assurance of the superior, he represents himself as somewhat uncertain of judgement
>
> (Laswell and Dwight 1949:30-31).

Much the same point was made over 2000 years earlier by the Chinese philosopher, Gui Guzi:

> *Yang* (ie. persuading from above to below) encourages straightforward speaking. Yin (i. e. persuading from below to above) encourages speaking in forked tongue.
>
> (Tsao Ding-Ren 1985:103)

The role of the audience and the relative status of the reader in comparison to the writer influences more than just choice of words. In his classification of contemporary Chinese documents, Dai Lei (1988) distinguishes three types of official document that are distinguished by the relationship between the writer and the reader. Documents written by superiors to

inferiors are called *xiaxing gongwen* (downward documents); those written among equals *pingxing gongwen* (level documents); and those written by inferiors to superiors *shangxing gongwen* (upward documents). 'Downward documents' are abrupt. One might even call them deductive. 'Upward documents' tend to preface their main point or suggestion with a series of justifications for the main point. One might call them inductive (Kirkpatrick 1995).

In addition to knowing for whom any text is intended, the contrastive rhetorician needs to know something about the background of the author and the effect that author wishes to create. Wang Chong, the *enfant terrible* of first century Chinese politics, deliberately used a deductive style to outrage his political opponents (Wu 1988, Kirkpatrick 1995). Eggington (1987) has shown that Korean academic writing can vary depending on the international experience of the writer. Koreans educated in the United States write academic Korean differently from those who have never left Korea. It is important, therefore, for the researcher to establish the intended audience and the cultural authenticity and communicative purpose of the text being considered.

## Principle 4: Prescriptive manuals can be wrong

No one would seriously argue that the deductive essay was the only possible American essay style. Yet Scollon (1991) has shown that the American essay as taught in textbooks on composition is uniformly deductive. Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) examined ten rhetorically oriented freshman composition textbooks and isolated eight common assumptions that these textbooks made about the ideal composition. The first assumption they identified was that the linear thesis-driven model of writing is universal. Ramanathan and Kaplan then point out that the eight key points presented in these textbooks are all culturally decontextualised and make no reference to discipline specific writing. In a rejoinder, Raines and Zamel (1997) state that in their classes most students do not specialise in a particular discipline until after at least a year and a half's study and that therefore their writing classes cannot be discipline specific. This rejoinder serves as a telling reminder of the significant differences in so-called 'Anglo' educational traditions and that one should therefore make Australian–American comparisons with care.

Traditional notions of what comprises the expected norm in the reading and writing requirements of university students also need to be treated with caution. Recent research into academic reading and writing practices at Australian universities demonstrate that the traditional notion that Australian students need to be critically active is not the case across a number of disciplines (Reid, Kirkpatrick and Mulligan 1997). Indeed critical and wide reading is not encouraged, except in the social science disciplines. Much of the learning seems anchored at the reproductive end of Ballard and Clanchy's reproductive – analytical – speculative learning continuum (Ballard and Clanchy 1991) and seem to parallel so-called Asian learning styles (Cortazzi 1990), although there is increasing evidence that traditional notions of 'Asian' learning styles are also wide of the mark (Kember 1996, Littlewood 1999).

## Principle 5: Writers need models

Proponents of process writing criticise Contrastive Rhetoric as being product rather than process oriented (Leki 1991). As Leki also points out, there is a prescriptive aspect to the Contrastive Rhetoric approach that sounds like "In English we write like this; those who would write well in English must look at this pattern and imitate it" (Leki 1991:123). Proponents of

process writing are, in turn, criticised by advocates of Contrastive Rhetoric for adopting an approach that encourages students to discover form in the process of writing and that this represents "a significant part of the problem faced by students from non-US cultures" (Ramanathan and Kaplan 1996:22).

We shall have more to say about the development of process writing as a pedagogical method below, but here will address the tension between the two sides exemplified above. Models are important for student writers but appropriate and accurate models can be difficult to identify for several reasons. First, we have argued that texts within culture and discipline are varied and that prescriptive manuals are often guilty of presenting over-simplified or even inaccurate information. Second, we need to remember that students from the same culture who are transferring from secondary to tertiary education also experience difficulties in learning how to write in ways that are accepted by their lecturers as appropriate. Yet it is seldom that the expected ways of writing are made explicit or taught at universities. Content lecturers, by and large, have a mistaken view of literacy, believing it to be something definable and finite that students should have learned before coming to university. Lecturers see their role as teaching the content of a subject. They do not see it as their task to teach students how to present that content in disciplinary and culturally appropriate forms (Kirkpatrick and Mulligan 1996).

All these factors conspire to make it difficult for students and writing teachers to identify an appropriate model. But in order to teach writing we must know what writing to teach. The product being demonstrated as a model must be an accurate model and this is as true within culture as it is across culture. This approach need not become overly prescriptive in the way characterised by Leki above. The model acts as a guide. Writers are individuals and have individual voices and ways of expressing their individual voice, even within the driest of academic texts, need to be explored. This should be process writing's role. Process writing should encourage students to explore the possibilities of transferring onto the L2 text those cultural and individual constructs with which they feel happy, in such a way that they enhance their L2 texts rather than make them indecipherable for the assessor of the text. We cannot, however, expect students to discover the form of an acceptable product through process writing. They need to have appropriate models to guide them. A person who has never seen a watch would be hard put to make one even if provided with all the individual pieces.

## Principle 6: Everyone needs practice

Leki asks: "What are writing teachers to do with the information that cultures approach writing differently?" (Leki 1991:137). Knowing that cultures approach writing differently is not enough to make a person write well in all contexts in all cultures. We all need practice, even those of us who are operating within our own cultures. We have seen how complex a discourse community is. Learning how to communicate effectively in writing within and across disciplines and for a wide variety of audiences is a skill that needs constant practice. No one wakes up one morning and finds that they are suddenly utterly literate in their own culture. This basic fact should be drummed into students and lecturers alike. The most accomplished writers painstakingly draft and redraft their work, responding to the comments and criticism of friends and colleagues. So it is important then that our students understand the nature of literacy and realise that even their teachers have to work hard on improving their own literacy skills. Literacy must be seen in the broadest of terms:

> A prime task for any university teacher must still be to assist the development of competent human beings who will be motivated to continue using and refining throughout their lives the potential skills they acquire. . . . To be effectively literate is not only to have gained a certain competency in reading and writing, but also to go on exercising the habits, attitudes, know-how and values that equip a person to act on the language rather than just be acted on by it.
>
> (Reid 1997:71)

Perhaps another answer to the question asked by Leki above is that an understanding that cultures approach writing differently should be passed on to the academic community in general. It is curious that courses in contrastive rhetoric are taught only to students rather than to lecturers and assessors of writing. Any university that claims to be international and to have 'internationalised' its curriculum needs to have academic staff who have an international and cross-cultural perspective of educational traditions and writing practices.

## Principle 7: Change is constant

Many Australian universities currently adopt a 'communication in context' approach and place the teaching of generic writing skills either within or alongside the teaching discipline specific writing. Yet, Liddicoat (1997b) is right to express concern that, although students are being taught how to write texts within a specialised disciplinary framework, these texts are also culturally specific texts. In other words, a text is not only fashioned by a discipline, it is also fashioned by a culture.

Some students may willingly accept that they need to learn to write in different ways for different disciplines but may baulk at the required cultural style. It is common for students from non-Anglo cultures to complain that Anglo rhetorical patterns and styles, encapsulated in the aphorism "Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell 'em, tell 'em what you've told 'em" (Hinds 1987:144), are too simple and do not give them the chance to express themselves. It is often easy to use terms that denigrate the writing of other cultures, even though this denigration may be subconscious. Let us take the word 'digressive' as an example of an ideologically loaded term. Digression is valued in some French academic writing (Liddicoat 1997b), but the English learner of French may not accept this as the very word 'digressive' carries a negative connotation in English. Presenting arguments before making the main point is valued in Chinese rhetoric but this style may be considered long-winded in English (Kirkpatrick 1995).

Clyne (1987) has described cultural differences in the organisation of German and French academic texts. Hinds (1987) has posited a new typology of languages, calling some reader responsible and others writer responsible. Writers of writer responsible texts are expected to make the texts as clear and as easy to follow as possible. Writers do this by making much use of conjunctions and connectors and explicitly stating their argument, conclusion and point of view. Writers of reader responsible texts, on the other hand, expect their readers to work in order to make sense of their argument. Consequently such texts are characterised by lack of explicitness and a relatively infrequent use of connectors. Readers in reader responsible cultures expect to have to work hard to make sense of a writer's argument.

Hinds gives Japanese as an example of a reader responsible language and quotes Yoshikawa:

> What is often verbally expressed and what is actually intended are two different things. . . . What is not verbally expressed counts most. . . Although it is not expressed verbally you are expected to know it by *kan* - intuition.
>
> (Yoshikawa 1978:144).

We have agreed that if we need to teach writing then we must know what writing to teach and we have seen that, given the complexity involved in cultural and disciplinary differences, this is not an easy task. The task is made no easier by the knowledge that cultures are dynamic and what is valued by a culture can therefore change. An illuminating example of such a change in cultural values is provided in an essay on the history of basic writing programs in the United States (Collins (1993). He charts the change from when writing was taught by tenured middle-class white males in Departments of English where learning how to write involved mostly middle class students writing with or against texts of the accepted canon, from Plato to Hemingway.

By the late 1980s, however, the teaching of writing had moved out of the English Department and into a writing programme and had become the province of poorly paid females on insecure short-term contracts. The student body had also changed dramatically with the increase of minority students whose own variety of English was not white middle-class or who spoke English as a second language. It was, Collins argues, in this atmosphere that process writing became popular. The canon had disappeared and there was a turn to discipline-based rhetorics. No canon meant no easily identifiable models. At the same time the students were often unfamiliar with the demands of academic writing:

> Unfamiliar or unpracticed with the essay formats characteristic of academic writing, basic students must first learn to write narratives, beginning with personal experience and working outwards to a public domain.
>
> (Collins 1993:169)

Whether one agrees with this explanation of the development of process writing or not, many Australian readers will find much to identify with in this account. It serves to underline that the uses of literacy and what is valued as good literacy practice reflect changes in society. We need to be aware of this social dimension of literacy.

Valued and preferred styles change with the times. To understand these changes, we need to undertake studies in Contrastive Rhetoric that are culturally sensitive. So, if we want to learn about how writing works in different cultures we would do well to listen to Liu, who, in the context of Asian rhetorics, complains that "US based comparative rhetoricians show little interest in knowing how Asian rhetorical traditions have been conceptualised by Asian scholars themselves and within their native contexts" (Liu 1996:4). By knowing, for example, that the Chinese rhetorical tradition of the eight-legged essay has been looked down upon by the majority of Chinese scholars, Western scholars of contrastive rhetoric might not have been so quick to claim that it has influenced the contemporary writing in English of Chinese students. The following is a typical quote:

> In any consideration of the qualities of the eight-legged essay, we must not forget it was the epitome of servile literature: we cannot regard it simply as a form of composition.
>
> (Shu Wu 1993:85).

## Conclusion

Teaching writing well depends on recognising that cultural expectations about how texts are written are as important as grammar and vocabulary. Contrastive rhetoric can be a useful approach for teaching this aspect of writing because it recognises that writers organise their texts in culturally specifc ways. However, good language teaching requires good research. The results of studies in contrastive rhetoric can be of great value to teachers of writing, and contrastive studies of academic writing, whether they be across discipline or across culture or both, can be of great value to all academics. Such studies, however, need to ensure they follow the principles outlined above if their findings are to be of value to writing teachers and academics.

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# Teaching literature across cultures and across artforms

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## Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to show how literature has been taught successfully in a tertiary context by adopting a cross-cultural perspective, across artforms, and combining an intercultural language teaching pedagogy with critical theory. A new methodology of teaching literature emerged from two years of course design and implementation. This methodology is based on the inseparability of language and culture, and on an intercultural syllabus. The unit, *Contemporary European Narrative: Literary and Visual*, offered to students of French, German and Italian, drew on specific languages and cultures and at the same time offered a cross-cultural perspective by utilising texts which crossed national boundaries. The structure and teaching approach of the unit mirrored the language-specific as well as promoting its cross-cultural aspect.

The chapter is structured in two main parts: Part I includes a brief description of the unit and its structure including the choice of literary texts in German, French and Italian. Part I provides a rationale for teaching literature cross-culturally and outlines the teaching methodology practised by the team in the framework of the unit; Part II provides a rationale for teaching literature across artforms; the conclusion deals with what was taught and learnt.

## Course design

The cross-cultural perspective adopted in the teaching of the course *Contemporary European Narrative: Literary and Visual* is based on the inseparability of language and culture and on the modern European languages taught in the Department (French, German and Italian), through the texts and their reception in the three countries and beyond. The course is team designed and taught. Three core texts were set: Thomas Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer* (*Mario and the Magician*), *Michel Tournier's Le Roi des Aulnes* (*The Erl-King*) and Italo Calvino's *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (*If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*). These were supplemented by additional critical articles grouped in two folios, one in English, one in the target language. Because this was not a standard comparative literature course, students were also required to read the literature in the languages of the major they were studying. This

maximised exposure to the target language. There is nothing sacrosanct about an English translation of a text; other translations are potentially better, as was definitely the case with the translation of Tournier's *The Erl-King* in Italian. The Italian version contains many annotations of a cultural nature. Reading literature in the target language helps the students write their essays in that language not just by reinforcing language skills but also by exposure to literary registers.

As set out in our differently slanted article *Australian Perspectives on (inter)national European Narratives*, "although materials for the unit are overall in the written form, aimed at increasing the students' reading skills and at strengthening interest towards reading in the modern European languages, visual narratives, films, documentaries and paintings and music, were also included. Visual narratives and music as is acknowledged in recent texts on teaching and learning literature, are a powerful and enriching source for the teachers who are more and more confronted by students influenced by a dominant visual culture".[1]

The structure of the course is as follows: 1) a lecture in English with all students combined. In this intercultural links are built between texts, authors, literary trends and countries; 2) one tutorial in each of the languages and 3) a fortnightly seminar to discuss the results of students' language and culture-specific studies, including critical reception of the texts, not confined to European countries.

This structure is designed to enable students to make meaningful comparisons between different narrative genres and art forms, and to develop an ability to think across cultures. The course facilitates this by providing a range of viewpoints for assessing each culture. While the historical focus for all texts except Calvino and Wenders proved to be World War II – either in anticipation or in retrospect - our primary object of study was narrative, and the particular narrative forms generated by this subject matter.

## I. Rationale for the literary texts

### 1. The texts taught in German were chosen from a range of other possibilities for the following reasons:

Mann's *Mario und der Zauberer* had the advantages 1) of being short, alongside much lengthier works by French and Italian writers; 2) of clearly anticipating World War II from a time years before its outbreak; 3) of being a typical example of its author's use of a distancing irony both in language and tone (e.g. through the ironized narrator paying lip service to sheltering the children and then allowing them to remain after all throughout a dubious stage performance with a fatal conclusion); and 4) in its Italian setting. A healthy sprinkling of Italian words for local colour (and further narrative distance) was a familiarising feature for our Italian students, just as Goethe's poem that is central to Tournier's *Roi des Aulnes* exemplified the European focus we had signalled with the course title. Italian figures uttering an incorrect German and inappropriately using the familiar 'du'-form provided a discussion point for students whose own language level is such that they could recognize (and no doubt take heart from) the errors. The layers of Mann's irony also enabled discussion of language in context: at one point [2] there is a telling play with modal verbs, perpetually modifying the force of the main verb and exemplifying that "lähmende Verstrickung des Willens" (crippling entwinement of the will) which is at the core of the political commentary of this work.

Beyond more formalistic issues, this text is ideal for alerting students to the narrative role of literary irony. Mann's narrator alternates between an urbane tone with an Olympian narrative stance, and a breathless tone of alarm, which then becomes contained by the return of a cosy normality. Involved in the story as a protagonist himself, the narrator also seems to reflect the implication of the German bourgeoisie in the rise of the hypnotic lure of Fascism. The charlatan performance by Mann's hypnotist Cipolla provided a rich parallel to Wiene's *Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919), from which an excerpt was screened in the seminar. This film was viewed by the influential cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer as a reflection of the mass hypnosis of the German bourgeoisie that brought Hitler to power, a further point for lively seminar discussion.

A narrative role for language itself can also readily be extracted from this short tale. The final scene depicting the suspect magician Cipolla and the boy from the crowd, Mario, is depicted without the intervening narrator's presence, sensed so strongly in the rest of the story. A distanced perspective no longer asserts itself between the events depicted and the teller of the tale. Long stretches of the conversation between Cipolla and Mario are repeated without interpolation. There is a dramatic reason for this, as the catastrophic climax gathers pace and intensity, especially in view of the long delayed entry of Cipolla himself. But there is also a sense of the narrator receding totally, of the level of language - to this point his best defence - being conquered by Cipolla, who controls the stage in dialogue with Mario. This is particularly effective after his silent opening, when he aroused and then gauged audience expectations.

Mann's work speculated about Fascism well before it ran any risk of becoming exhausted as a historical force or as a literary theme. Both German-language brick readings signalled in their titles this inescapable historical dimension of the text. Mann himself was a classic example of a European author firmly located within a venerable tradition of the word, of writing, of the unassailable value of the *Geist*. Peter Weiss' *Meine Ortschaft* then provided a retrospective view of Fascism, when Mann's prophetic historical allegory had been outstripped beyond human comprehensibility by the real excesses of Fascism. A sparse prose style devoid of all irony or distancing oscillates between documentation of one of the death camps and grim reflections on them. The Alain Resnais film *Night and Fog*, long regarded in Germany too as one of the few possible approaches to events defying representation, was screened in part and recommended for full viewing.

At the historical level the self-reappraisal of Western morality and cultural values since World War II has been one of the main European narratives, and it is a history about which our students otherwise do not necessarily learn much. But the issues at stake are no less compelling, as well as being sobering for readers coming to these texts for the first time. By chance this coincided with the first Australian screenings of Benigni's film *Life is Beautiful*, described in the *Australian* as a "Holocaust comedy". In the context of our course, the issues included the following: how can even a glimmer of insight into the Holocaust be portrayed in literature? From what perspective? And above all, how might any views be expressed in the German language, itself debased by the Nazi propaganda machine?

The texts by Mann and Weiss plus the Tournier novel and Celan's poem *Todesfuge* provided a wide spectrum of stylistic approaches to the ascendancy and ultimately the nihilism (cf. Weiss) of the Fascist legacy. The poem also complemented and challenged language studies in that the secondary literature excerpt chosen for the English reading brick discussed

translation issues, ever problematic with poetry. This holds particularly for a highly structured poem about an event at the limits of representability, the Holocaust. Adorno's moral dictum that poetry was impossible after Auschwitz implies a respectful silence that is confounded by this verbal fugue, above all through the poignant authority of its poet's Jewishness. This of course is a narrative with which the new Europe is still wrestling, as witnessed by the endless deliberations over an appropriate design for a Holocaust memorial in the new/old German capital, Berlin.

The question of translation itself is one where our course prodded standard preconceptions. For where we are used to translations into our own language when not in command of that used, the possibility of alternate languages of translation normally does not arise. But students of German reading Calvino and Tournier in German rather than English are of course potentially reading a translation more faithful to the original, and in any case one exemplifying different aspects of the translation process itself. This process came into play when no translation of Weiss' *Meine Ortschaft* could be found, and so one was created for the course brick.

## 2. The French text: Michel Tournier, Le Roi des Aulnes

Michel Tournier's *le Roi des Aulnes* (*the Erl-King*) was chosen both because of the writer's position as a link between tradition and the realist novel, and because it has some stylistic features of postmodern writers. For a course on narrative he is ideally placed between Thomas Mann, whose work he much admired, and Italo Calvino. A journey of initiation, *The Erl-King* demands active participation on the part of the reader. Like the main character, who has to decipher the signs to give meaning to his life, the reader has to tie the constellations of images and the various strands of narrative together in order to make sense of the whole. Yet, in spite of the Second World War as its subject matter, and the wealth of accurate details woven into the fabric of the text, *The Erl-King* has been labelled by some a game of language, a criticism all too familiar to Calvino.

From a crosscultural point of view, the novel's setting in France and Germany instantly challenges those national boundaries our course sets out to cross. Tournier studied philosophy in Germany after the war and comes from a family of germanophiles, both his parents being scholars of German. His vision of Germany and his perspective on the War provided ample material for lively discussions in the seminars.

If all Tournier's novels are novels of initiation, for the main characters, the quest is not only a process of enlightenment as in the realist novel, but also one of transformation. At the end of their initiation, the characters are changed. The critic David Gascoigne has this to say about Tournier:

> While novels such as Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* or Dickens's *David Copperfield* place their hero's development primarily in the context of social, cultural and interpersonal factors, a different tradition, of metaphysical quest and mystic forces, informs works such as Novalis' *Heinrich Von Ofterdingen* or Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel* (*The Glass Bead Game*). The logic which is seen to govern the hero's evolution is radically different in these two traditions: the one is culturally and historically specific, and self-contained, while the other is seen as the manifestation of timeless patterns and depends on the acceptance of a transcendental system of some kind. Some of the greatest Bildungsroman writers combine elements of both logics - Thomas Mann and James Joyce arguably come into this category."[3]

There is always a sense of duality and doubleness while we read the novel, and this from the very beginning. The writing is only in part realistic in the sense that there is a progression in time, that the main character is fully developed and writes a diary. The historical and geographical settings are well defined. We have a narrative voice with, at the beginning at least, an omniscient narrator. But accurate details and description of a factual character give a fantastic turn to the narrative and the inscription of other texts, both from myth and literature, makes of this novel an ideal text to engage students with the complexity of a modern narrative.

An analysis of small sections of the novel can show that the narrative voice moves between a conventional, independent view of history and the play of personal emotion, memory, intertextual and cultural references which constitutes the main character Tiffauges' readings of that history and of his place within it.[4]

Approaching the novel via music as a structuring principle does not simplify its architecture. Tournier gives "la fugue" as his chosen musical form. Such a choice implies a play of identities and repetition - a single theme with perhaps a second or counter theme returning in different voices, at different pitches and in different combinations. However, the context of each occurrence gives it a slightly different meaning each time. For example, the boys in Tournier's text are interchangeable: Jeannot, Etienne, the skaters, Haio Haro, Lothar, singular plural, the singular being representative of the whole, momentary incarnation of a principle.

In addition, the novel appropriates and transforms myths and passages from other novels, thus adding meaning for a well-read reader willing to participate in the elaboration of the whole. For example Rachel 's words to Abel: "you are not a lover you are an ogre" draw the following answer from him: "ô saisons, ô châteaux! En prononçant cette simple phrase Rachel a fait surgir le fantôme d'un enfant monstrueux.."[5]. The English translation leaves out the first line of Rimbaud's poem and starts with "By uttering this simple sentence, Rachel has conjured up the ghost of a monstrous child.."[6] This omission leaves out the reference to the poet. In the French text, "The monstrous child" refers to the character's subversive school friend Nestor, who is thus introduced in the narrative with the first line of the poem by Rimbaud, the rebellious, precocious homosexual poet who produced all his work between the age of 17 and 21,[7] developing further the Nestor/Rimbaud side of Tiffauges. The references to other texts are mirrored by the way in which correspondences are established in the text between characters and events.

At the semantic level, the tension between the different voices and the duality between the realistic and the fantastic is reinforced in the series of oppositions established in the first chapter and built up into specific schemes, the actualisation of which demands a reader attentive to the possibilities of the text as the novel progresses. Left/right; benign/malign; sacred/diabolic; head/body are but some of the more striking oppositions leading to the notions of sacrifice and rebirth, earth and heaven, matter and the supernatural. Finally all the details of Tiffauges' world are given a counterpart taken from the reality of the extermination camps. The constellations of images attached to the contrast head/body mark the play in the text around the notion of gravity and lightness, working towards reunion and its implied spiritual rebirth. At the end of the novel the reunion of opposites is complete, as Abel carries the child-star on his shoulder thus realising his "astrophoric" vocation as Atlas supporting not the world, but the sky. The child-head without body has become Tiffauges' head, hence the implied redemption of Tiffauges, in spite of his imminent death, and his belief the child spirit will save

him. However, besides the counterpoints of narratives, not all the narratives are Tiffauges'. The ending of the novel is a subject of contention[8]. Does Tiffauges redeem himself by carrying off the Jewish child and does he fulfil his destiny by sinking into the bog with the child, thus becoming another Erl-King?

Tournier's critics have responded to the text in very different ways. The students had to read the articles and chapters of books for the tutorials and seminars in order to confront their own reading with the interpretations provided in their collection of articles. They gradually became aware of how some discrepancies in the responses could be linked to a particular time in a specific country or to a literary tradition.

The critical material in German or by German critics revealed a strong resistance to a perceived aestheticisation of the Nazi area. In "Ästhetizismus der Barbarei: über Tournier's Roman der Erlkönig", the critic Améry objected to what he saw as an aestheticisation of barbarity in the novel.[9] Zimmermann[10] relates differences in the work's reception in France and Western Germany to the translation available. French critics, she says, are more interested in a structural approach, German critics address more the content. The Germans concentrate on the second half of the novel, set in Nazi Germany. The aspect of "Bewältigung" or coming to terms with the German past is their yardstick. German critiques appear mainly in dailies and weeklies (apart from Amery's in a literary journal), whereas the French are largely in literary journals, a fact she attributes to the influence of the "nouvelle critique". While acknowledging the legitimacy of this approach, Zimmermann pleads for an approach against the grain with a non-structuralist methodology. However for her the German critics overlook the fact that it was not Tournier's intention to engage in "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit". She sees his approach as reflecting more the vulnerability of French intellectuals for the fascination of fascism, and relates this to the different approaches to confronting the past in the two countries. The French and English critics selected focused on the appeal of fascism for ordinary people and on the question of the novel being a game of language. Boulimié writes: "Unlike Günter Grass, who in his novel *The tin drum* ridicules Nazi ceremony, Tournier shows that the danger these ceremonies represented were/are in the fascination they have for people. The strength of Tournier's writing is that he restores the full ambivalence of the myth. The ogre is seen under his dual aspect, child seducer, protector, and killer of children".[11] Her view is shared by Platten for whom the novel addresses the issue that fascism is a question of common cultural heritage, hence the lure of fascism in many European countries, and its temptation for ordinary people.[12]

Tournier's answers to Améry's criticism were included in what remains a contemporary issue: the ethical debate on the limits of art in the face of violence. "Yes," he writes, "the barbarity that I describe in the Erl-King is aesthetic. But this is nothing of my own doing. The Wagnerian appeal, the ceremonies, the lighting, the parades were an aesthetic..... If you take away this aspect of Nazism, you cannot give a true picture of it... it was a nocturnal feast, a murderous one. It was not ridicule, it was terrifying... If one wants to give a complete picture of Nazism, which I have done in the Erl-king, one has to describe its display, with its ceremonies, feasts, splendour, all its seduction through violence and with it, at the same time, describe its backyard with its concentration camps and its crimes. The two sides are inseparable."[13]

The question of the novel as mere language game served as a useful introduction to

postmodernism. If as Redfern[14] claims, the writer presents the plight of the human condition as a game of language, it leaves aside the idea that men and women can have an influence on shaping the society they live in. On the other hand, one can share Davis' view that in Tournier's novels "the questing subject perceives himself as an addressee of language rather than as its master or origin".[15] As this same critic points out: "The assumption that reality is meaningful does not guarantee the intelligibility of the world, and the messages which Tournier's characters discern may be ambiguous and polysemic rather than reassuringly unequivocal".

The postmodern dimension of the *Erl-King* therefore resides in its demand for careful reading and faith in the world of the text. When asked who kills the three boys, Tournier answers: "the whole novel of course, the irresistible building up of an array of little events and notations accumulated in the 400 pages which precede it". This process, referred to by Worton in an article chosen for the English brick as "the arbitrariness between sign and referent"[16] underlines how it is impossible to give an explanation which does not take into account the rich texture of the novel. The text resists a reader who would like easy answers, because the multiple relations established in the text demand full resolution. The need for the reader to become an interpreter of symbols is a task that the main character performs on every page by writing his diary, a means of understanding and interpreting the world around him. The mise en abime of the writer himself and of the reader through the main character no doubt constitute the self-reflexivity of Tournier's text and its postmodernity.

## 3. Italian text. Teaching postmodern narrative: Italo Calvino, *If on a winter's night a traveller*

Although the term postmodernism has probably been around since 1870,[17] postmodernism as such really developed in the Seventies in architecture, art, literature and criticism. A basic interpretation is teachable and learnable through comparisons with other movements, analysis of key ideas, definitions, and especially postmodern artefacts such as Calvino's novel. Unlike previous literary movements, Postmodernism does not place itself in opposition with the preceding current. Although it is a reaction to Modernism, it also incorporates and expands Modernism, which is why it retains the word 'modernism', unlike for example Romanticism, which developed in reaction to Enlightenment. In Eco's words "postmodern discourse demands, in order to be understood, not the negation of the already said, but its ironic rethinking" (1985: 68).

If Modernism placed a lot of emphasis on the role of the artist and the writer, Postmodernism is concerned with the reader, with the text. Modernism (1890-1930), which developed after the break up of Naturalism and Symbolism, ironises bourgeois rationality (Mann, Joyce, Pirandello), while postmodern narrative explores and exposes the writing process. Postmodern narrative is in fact selfconscious, self-reflective, metanarrative. As with Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, postmodern novels often deal with narrative process and purposefully highlight the fictitiousness of narrative by exposing the writer's devices and techniques adopted to achieve particular effects. There is no more innocence on the part of the reader, nor on the part of the writer. The text is a cultural artefact, a combination of all the other texts previously written. Generally postmodern texts, such as *If on a winter's night a traveller*, do not resolve conflicts, or provide answers, nor do they offer ideal or 'right' paths, and leave the end open to many interpretations. In Calvino this is portrayed by the recursive

structure of the novel, with the embedded narratives, all leading in different directions. Calvino though chooses to give a 'happy' ending to the protagonists of the narrative frame.

*If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* suggests that Calvino succeeded in his dream of being a "mercurial" author, with the attributes of lightness and quickness.[18] That's how he entitled the first two of the *Memos for the Next Millenium* (1996). His 'lightness' and mobility, and interest in the artifice of narrating, especially in regard to his latest works, have however been at times interpreted as "superficial", frivolous, or escapist.[19] Even though his narrative style is light and witty, and his texts forever change in the pursuit of new forms and new meanings, the substance is there, it is complex, expressed in light words and structures. What is lightness for Calvino? In his words, all pertaining to the semantic field of physics, it is "the finest dust; a field of magnetic impulses (1996: 15); a veil of minute particles of humours and sensations, a fine dust of atoms, like everything else that goes to make up the ultimate substance of the multiplicity of things (1996: 20). How and to what does Calvino apply his theory of lightness in literature? To structures, but above all language. Calvino's quest for lightness is achieved through the writing process itself. He escapes heaviness in his texts by changing his approach to writing and experimenting with fresh methods. For this reason he has been defined as "the writer of the next millennium". He experiments with new forms, drawing from the past, from as many other texts as possible. In that sense he can be said to embody the postmodern *intertextualité* coined by Julia Kristeva. His multiple interests, in literary theory, in folk literature, science, anthropology, converge in his *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller.*

Calvino's novel was criticised in Germany, while in France it received a mixed reception because of the strong focus on the narrative process rather than engaging with social and historical issues. For the same reasons Calvino's novel was criticised in Italy too. Cesser Garble (1980) in his review of the novel entitled "Come sei, lettrice?' [What are you like, woman reader?] described the novel as a commercial idea which turns into a theoretical proposition on the sociological and economic functions of the novel: how to make a novel, how to sell it, and also how to "produce" a reader. Readers are also somehow part of the action, as they provide the title for the last inserted novel, "What story down there awaits its end?" Story and discourse are intermingled. As Gerhard Regn wrote (1989) in "Il ritorno al romanzesco", from the first pages the story enters the discourse with the train's cloud of smoke inscribed onto the page. The aim of revealing this narrative device is to diminish the importance of story by drawing readers' attention to the artefact. This in turn should avoid passive readings of the novel and encourage instead participation in the narrative discourse and process. From the first pages readers' habits are probed, questioned, challenged. The second person address, sometimes in the imperative mood, accompanied by a familiar tone: "watch out, you're elbowing your neighbour, apologise at least (1997: 7) has been defined by Italian literary theorist Cesser Segre (1979) as one of the novelties of the text. Traditionally in fact the reader usually was addressed in novels to be reassured, or to summarise what the hero was about to do, as in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, (1749).

According to Garble, however, the novelty of *If on a winter's night a traveller* is not its playfulness but rather its dysfunctionality, manifested in its mechanical emphasis, which, according to him, hid Calvino's secret anguish: a dislike for what he was or where he was as a writer. While Garble was at the time "an engaged" critic, Segre was a linguist and a literary critic, his reaction to the novel is therefore entirely different. Segre (1979) describes the

procedure adopted by Calvino in writing his novel as the opening of a Christmas box full of toys. The more boxes Calvino opened, the more toys he found to play with, the more he enjoyed himself. Do readers enjoy themselves as much as Segre thinks Calvino enjoyed himself writing his novel? Eco (1985) in his reflection entitled "Enjoyment" defines readers' enjoyment as learning something about the language or the world. Reading the novel is indeed like opening the page on the different languages and cultures of the world.[20] Each of the ten boxed narratives is in fact representative of a particular style, genre, theme and cultural background.

The structure of the novel consists of twelve chapters and the ten interrupted novels, the boxed narratives: except for the last two each chapter is followed by a boxed novel. Both frame and framed stories have an open structure. The titles of the interrupted novels form a poem, or another incipit, a traditional one, as remarked in chapter eleven by the sixth reader (1997: 258). Chapters one and twelve function as a prologue and an epilogue as in traditional novels. The outcome of the epilogue was already anticipated at the end of chapter two (1997: 32). Between the prologue and epilogue there are the adventures of the Reader and the interrupted stories. The chapters form the narrative frame, in the tradition of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* and *The Arabian Nights*. But, whereas the frame traditionally provides meaning for the boxed stories in this type of structure, in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* the frame deconstructs the framed narratives by interrupting the stories and erasing readers' expectation that they will have continuity. At the story level it creates a conspiracy theory explaining the interrupted novels and frustrating the protagonists of the story and the potential readers (us) who are searching for the end to the framed stories and also a novel with a purpose. The novel also highlights the validity of intertextuality by showing that many interrupted stories can function as a story.

The action in the novel occurs in the narrative frame as the Reader and Ludmilla's search for fullness leads them to find interrupted novels in the framed narratives. Although apparently there is no narrative unity, there is a progression or maybe regression. Each framed story cancels the next ending with the apocalyptic novel. However the world continues, with the union of the two readers, in the narrative frame. The narrative voice, like an aleph, reproduced into fragmented entities going in different directions at the beginning of the novel, returns at the point of departure at the end of the novel (Segre 1979: 168).[21] According to Calvino, writing was a map[22] of the world, it does not seek to give meaning to the world but was itself meaning. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* is a novel of the world because it contains cultural elements of narrative as form from all over the world. At the same time it encapsulates theories of reading and writing narrative to transform readers from being naïve to being critical. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* is an "open" (Eco 1987) text, since it begins with a general model of a possible reader through the choice of a specific linguistic code, a certain literary style in the frame with the innovative, familiar "you". It is addressed to a specific audience, in terms of the specific socioeconomic and cultural milieu, one that is defined, as the implied author assumes that the reader has a TV, a house with several rooms. Since it could not be expected that all readers of the novel would be experts in literary reader-response theory, the metalanguage, the specialised competence, the theory of reading and writing, is inscribed in the text to create that competency by reading the novel. It is indeed through all the different experiments in reading experienced by the reader, that the novel generates its Model Reader, by building up his cultural competence and by transforming him from a naïve into a critical reader. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*

attempts all the paths towards good reading.[23] The Reader's journey, from naivete to critical reading achieved through reflection on reading and on different types of reading and different types of tales is highlighted from the first pages. The novel however can be read on different levels, as a metacritical text on reading and writing theories but also as an adventure story. The mixture of learned and popular appealed and still appeals to readers in Italy and all over the world.[24]

In conclusion, as the title itself illustrates, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* is essentially a postmodern adventure into reading and writing, an enjoyable voyage into specific world narratives, affirming narrative as a global discourse for the next millennium. It is not just an exercise on the narrative process or on producing the ideal reader. If it were it would have disappeared a long time ago from book and library shelves, and from literary discussion. Instead, for its emphasis on the value of literature, language and writing as systems of communication, it is still read and will continue to be read. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* was chosen for the unit since it pays tribute to the universality of narrative, of telling tales, across national and cultural boundaries. If cinema, according to Wenders, is the best representation of European culture, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* is perhaps the best universal cross-cultural novel.

## II. Narrative across art forms

### Film language: European visual narratives

More familiar issues of literary translation arose in part I. A different sort of translation is involved with the scripts and visuals of films, a two way process for a start. But we pay particular heed to language and its translation into images when a scriptwriter is a famous author in his own right, as was the case with a number of films on which Wim Wenders and the Austrian author Peter Handke collaborated. Wenders' film *Wings of Desire* was chosen to conclude this course because of the way it exemplifies a number of issues:

1. The telling of stories in cinema, the transmission of European narratives on the screen. The whole process of storytelling is foregrounded with the Homer figure, determined to lend some narrative continuity to the discontinuities of 20th century German history. But it is also present from the outset with the voice-over (offscreen narrator) reciting the words being written before our eyes: "Als das Kind noch Kind war...", "When the child was still a child..." And it is there in perhaps the least successful element of Wenders' film, the film being made about wartime Berlin which the Peter Falk figure participates in. The script of *Wings...*, bordering in places on pretentiousness, ensures a challenging blend of literary and cinematic narratives.
2. An attempt at lending European dimensions to a German setting and story, permeated by history. Viewed in retrospect, the film miraculously anticipated the fall of the Wall, an event it foretold with the fairytale element (cf. Aymé's 'le passe-muraille') of the angels crossing from one side of Berlin to the other, *through* the Wall. The refusal, consistent with the angels' timeless perspective, to acknowledge the existing state of affairs as other than a transitory stage of German/European history, is reflected in the soaring camera work taking in the whole of Berlin, still an undivided entity from an angel's point of view.
3. The legacy of German history with flashbacks to wartime events, buildings burning,

'Truemmerfrauen' (the ladies of the ruins) clearing debris, etc. And yet Berlin, ever a cosmopolitan city, is transfigured and never allowed to become swallowed up by the identity issues that obsessed the New German Cinema. The erstwhile and born again German capital is extended into a European (and beyond) dimension by the strong presence of other languages (especially, but not limited to, those of the former occupiers of West Germany and Berlin), and of other music (Nick Cave and the Badseeds, Crime and the City Connection). Yet Wenders' strongly auteur approach retained a distinct German core, a salutary reminder for students of what such a mix could yield alongside the Euro-pudding of some of the co-productions of the 90s, funded across national borders. In one brick reading Wenders - still a year before the fall of the Wall - mused on German and European identity from the perspective of someone who had vainly sought some substitute in the U.S.A. Always stimulating in his aesthetic judgements, Wenders posits in this piece what he calls 'a common language *par excellence*: the European film'. This assertion is precisely the kind of debate from a number of vantage points that our students were able to conduct in seminars.

## Film narratives/literary narratives

For our students, especially German students, there is the further potential dimension of reading this film as a kind of anti-*Faust*. Aptly described as a vertical road movie, the film shows the reverse process to Faust's transcendental yearning that became symbolic of the intellectual glory and the political blightedness of Germany. In place of a man wishing to shake off earthly restrictions, Wenders portrays an angel who wishes to incarnate, to experience the sensual delights of human life rather than the eternal greyness of an angelic existence. The Eternal Feminine draws the angel to earth, rather than striving humanity ever upwards. The angel longs to savour the elapse of time, not to measure all activity against the yardstick of the eternal suspension of an immortal moment (one to which Faust might say "Verweile doch, du bist so schön"). Where Faust had impatiently strained to leave Auerbach's Cellar, the angel relishes the prospect of the taste and aroma of coffee. Indeed it is in the cellar of the Berlin underground rock scene that he and the trapeze artist Marion finally come together.

This inversion of the Faust myth is crucial to Wenders' design in blending the past, present and future of Germany's central city, dripping with history. A reworking of *Faust* by a major artist in a different medium is clearly a European narrative worthy of study. But the literary underpinnings of this film and many others in German postwar cinema further demonstrate why it makes sense in a course like this to go beyond the literary in a progressively visual culture. Just as all literature involves fieldwork for language studies in showing language in action, many European art films presuppose not just film history, but also literary history. And a cornerstone of world literature like *Faust* is not a given in an Australian context. This point was driven home recently when rehearsing for a local performance of Mahler's 8th Symphony, whose second movement includes an elaborate setting of the final scenes of *Faust II*. For our Hungarian-born choir conductor this had clearly been part of a general education as a teenager, whereas she encountered wideranging unfamiliarity with the text among the hundreds of singers.

## Literature, painting and installation

The works of three artists were brought alongside Tournier's text and as an introduction to postmodernism, that of the German painter Anselm Kiefer, the French installation artist Boltanski and the Italian painter Cucchi. Only the parallels between Anselm Kiefer and Michel Tournier will be examined in the present chapter.

Like Tournier, Kiefer does not seek a realistic representation of history. He chooses instead to reappropriate the past by focusing on places of historical and symbolic importance for Germany. He paints the monuments of Nazi Germany or works from drawings such as the design for the Funeral Hall for the great German soldiers by Wilhelm Kreis in the Hall of Soldiers, Berlin, which was never built. He turns the hall into a memorial for Shulamith, the Jewish counterpoint to the German Margarete in Celan's poem *Todesfuge*, which inspired the paintings. The large canvas places the viewer in a position of staring inside an oven-shape building with a blackened ceiling. In the words of Ernst Von Alphen: "the space is no longer celebratory; it has been transformed into a place of mourning".[25] However German critics' responses to the work show the same ambiguity as for Tournier's *The Erl-King*. They have noted in particular the monumental architectural space and have seen this form of re-enactment as a strategy of reanimating fascism. Yet, for all the grandiloquence of his subject matter, irony here again is not absent from Kiefer's work. "Operation SeaLion I" is a parody of a plan approved by Hitler in the summer of 1940 to invade England. It is known that a tradition existed in the German military of employing toys as a means of teaching strategies for military action. In this case, as the painting illustrates, bath tubs and toy boats were used.

In his exploration of the canon of German literature and sites of cultural importance, Kiefer has also produced paintings about the former Prussia, a land which assumes a mythical dimension in Tournier's novel. The words written across the middle of one of the painting entitled "March Heath", allude to old patriotic tune of the region "Märkische Heide, Märkischer Sand" which became a marching song during the Second World War[26], while the painting itself presents a burnt barren landscape, in sharp contrast to the idealised image of Prussia both in German culture and literature and in Tournier's novel.

The description of Prussia in the *Erl-King* as a land of pure signs can be compared to what Speranza, Robinson's island in Tournier's first novel *Vendredi*, represents for him, a space inside which it becomes possible to achieve a metamorphosis. East Prussia with its shifting dunes and swarms of migrant birds, wolves and auroch/European bison is above all the land of the legendary Teutonic knights. The place is "a repository of myths". Yet for all its imaginary attributes, the land that he depicts and in which Göring had his Jägerhof /hunting lodge for the Rominten game preserve, has been the subject of years of thorough research.[27]

Tournier writes that he gathered a lot of documentation on Prussia between 1965 and 70, but also that he chose Prussia not only because many French prisoners were sent into the heart of the Reich, but also because in the German mind it has always been enveloped in prestige and invested with poetry. Therefore, at the same time as he makes use of the memoirs of Göring's game keeper, Walter Frévert, to weave into the fabric of the text details and facts of a historical nature [Walter Frévert journal/ last conservator of the Rominten who committed suicide just after Tournier had managed to establish contact], he turns Prussia into the land of magic for his character, an imaginary landscape in which the transmutation will take place.

The treatment and the importance of the elements, especially fire, for both artists, is another formal feature which brings the writer and the painter closer. Anselm Kiefer adds to the surface of his canvasses charred bits of wood and burnt photographs, while mixing paint with sand, straw and molten lead. While this gives the canvasses an oppressive physical presence, fire has also been interpreted as a purifying element.[28]

The character of Tournier's first novel, *Vendredi*, achieves a progressive ascent through the hierarchy of the elements on his island. The first two chapters of *Vendredi* deal with the sea. He first wants to escape from the island and tries to build a boat; when this fails, he turns his attention to the island, cultivates the land and explores its depths; the gun powder explosion marks the transition to fire and to air; the final pages of the novel complete the ascent with the celebration of the sun. In the *Erl-King*, fire also marks the transitions in Tiffauges' quest. The destruction of the college in the explosion which kills his friend Nestor, the mine which decapitates the child and the napola in flame mark different stages of the character's consciousness.

Kiefer works with Wagner as his subject and with the myths from the Edda, a body of ancient Icelandic literature which remains a major source of German mythology like the mythic/cosmic tree Yggdrasil. He also quotes *The Ring of the Nibelung*, "Siegfried forgets Brunhilde 1975", for the betrayal of love as a source of chaos. Most of Tournier's evocations are of but one aspect of various mythic figures, of Atlas, St. Christopher, Cain, Abel, Don Juan, the Erl-King, the Ogre, to name a few.

In the same way as the text for Tournier becomes the space in which the play on words, stories and legends ties up nodes of meaning, in Kiefer's paintings the painter's studio, the monuments of the Third Reich, the forests and marches become the space where the transformation of the past occurs, the place where through the cathartic process of the work, a future might be possible. In this respect, both artists become myth makers.

While Cucchi was chosen because of his affinity with Kiefer, Boltanski was chosen as a counterpoint to the work of the latter. His is not the fascination for myth and alchemy that Tournier and Kiefer share. Absent is the seduction of Kiefer's huge canvasses. He uses discarded ordinary objects, piles of clothes, tin boxes, and school photographs to allude to the events of the Second World War rather than to assert a point of view. The teaching team was fortunate enough to take the students to the National Gallery where all were able to see, alongside a painting of Kiefer, the work of an Australian post-modern artist Imants Tiller. Whenever possible, it is essential to view the works rather than rely on reproductions if one is to talk about them in terms of size, colours, shapes, frames and space and the viewer's response in the context of other works rather than in terms of decontextualised motives and themes.

## Conclusion

Focusing on three major continental European authors gives the students a concrete sense of literary influences. The course also aims to develop an awareness of historical continuity from the emergence of fascism in Italy to its full realisation in Germany and its far reaching consequences for contemporary writers and artists in their attempts to come to terms with it. The wealth of critical texts in four languages enables the students to realise that English is one of many perspectives on a subject, as well as giving a solid grounding in reading critically.

Students became aware that sensitive subject matter was received very differently in the three countries and that reception is historically conditioned. Juxtaposing film and paintings with works of literature helps to break down preconceived ideas about the compartmentalization of the arts. Students realised that a painter can be just as involved as a writer in attempting to retrieve a sense of identity from the wreckage of history. Above all, teaching across artforms emphasises the existence of shared preoccupations amongst artists while giving students the means to evaluate the works within the specific tradition in which they are produced.

## Notes

[1] Carroli, P. Hillman, R. Maurer, L., *Australian Perspectives on (inter)national European Narratives*.Melbourne:Language Australia, 1999, p.157.

[2] Thomas Mann, Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden (S. Fischer Verlag: Oldenburg, 1960), VIII, 698.

[3] Gascoigne, D., ( 1996). *Michel Tournier*, Oxford/washington, D.C, BERG, p.170.

[4] see Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 185.

[5] Tournier, M. (1970), Le roi des Aulnes, Paris, gallimard, p. 21.

[6] Tournier, M,. *The Ogre*. Translated by Barbara Bray, New York, Doubleday& Company, Inc. p. 9.

[7] Gascoigne, D., *Michel Tournier*, op.cit., p.153.

[8] Levy K., (1992). The fatal temptation of the image: Specular Fascination in Tournier's Le roi des Aulnes, "I would argue that tournier's work depicts neither a victory nor a reconcialiation, but an unfulfilled initiation and, more precisely, a betrayal". The International Fiction Review 19.2, p.77.

[9] Amery J., *Asthetizimus der Barbarei über Tournier's Roman 'Der Erlkönig'*, Mercure XXVII, janvier 1973, pp.73-79.

[10] Zimmermann, M., (1978) *Zur Problematik von Überstzung und Rezeption: Michel Tournier's Le roi des Aulnes und seine deutsche Übersetzung*. In Franzosish Heute, 1978, 2, pp.92-102.

[11] Boulimié, A., (1988). *Michel tournier: le roman mythologique*. Paris, Corti, p.105,

[12] Platten, D.,The Geist in the Machine: Nazism in Tournier's Le Roi des Aulnes. , p. 188

[13] *Tournier fa ce aux lycéens*, Le Magazine Littéraire 226, janvier 1986.

[14] Redfern, WD. (1985). *Approximating man: Michel Tournier and play in language*. In Modern Language Review 80, pp. 304-319.

[15] Davis, C., (1988). *Michel Tournier: Philosophy and Fiction*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.p.183.

[16] Worton, M., (Fall-Winter 1982). Myth- Reference in Le Roi des Aulnes. Stanford French Reviewbrick p. 309.

[17] According to Charles Jenke, the term was used for the first time by British artist J. Watkins Chapman in 1870 (The origins of 'postmodernism', quoted in R. Appignanesi and C. Garratt *Postmodernism for beginners* (1995: 3).

[18] J. Updike (1981 ) in his review describes the novel as "something of a butterfly [...] at least it does fly, flicking itself this way and that".

[19] Writers associated with the *Tel Quel* French review, such as Ricardou, Sollier, Kristeva - who had in fact initiated the discussion and proposed a new theory of the novel, *le nouveau* roman had also been accused of escapism because of the strong focus on narrative form rather than social cultural issues.

[20] It is a "world novel": take it with you next time you plan to travel in an armchair. (Lorna Sage, *Observer*, n.d. back cover, *If on a winter's night a traveller*, UK, Minerva, 1997).

[21] As in Luis Borges' novel, El Aleph, translated into English as *The Aleph and other stories*, 1933-1969, by N.T. di Giovanni in collaboration with the author. N.Y., E.P. Dutton, 1970, quoted in Segre's article.

[22] The literary work is like an aleph, "a place where one can find, all the places of the earth, seen distinctly from every possible angle. [....] Literature is not exhaustible, for the simple reason that one book alone is not exhaustible. A book is not an entity deprived of communication: it is itself a connection; an axis.... (Borges quoted in Segre)

[23] According to Eco (1985): "The exactness (Calvino's Exactitude) of the textual project makes for the freedom of its Model Reader. If there is "a jouissance du texte" in Barthes' (1973) sense, it cannot be aroused and implemented except by a text producing all the paths of its 'good' reading (no matter how many, no matter how much determined in advance).

[24] As Davies (1981) remarks in his review of the novel, it sold more than 80,000 copies in the first month of publication in Italy.

[25] Von Alphen, E., (1997). Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art. Stanford, Calif, Standford Uni Press.

[26] Rosenthal, M., (1987). *Anselm Kiefer* . Chicago and Philadephia, p. 35

[27] Tournier, M., (1977). Le vent paraclet. Paris, Gallimard.

[28] Rosenthal, op.cit., p.55.

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# Cultural transmission in literacy acquisition: a case study in Chinese*

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## Introduction

Children learn to become members of their individual cultures at an early age through the process of socialization, and many studies have shown that language plays a vital part in this process. While some researchers focus on the development of children's spoken language as a process of learning how to mean, and how to interact appropriately with members of the same culture (Halliday 1975; Wells 1981), others examine the close relationship between literacy development and the socio-cultural context in which the written language is learned (Heath 1983; Gee 1990; Freebody and Welch 1993). In particular, much interest has been generated in the role which first reading materials play in the process of socialization (Freebody and Baker 1987; Baker and Freebody 1989; Luke 1988 ). The present study focuses on how culture is transmitted through the written language, on how children are socialized to accept the characteristics of a specific culture while they are learning to read in the language of that culture. Some of the reading materials for first graders which are used in school and at home in Hong Kong will be examined. The lexis, grammar and discourse structure will be analysed to see how the Chinese social order is organized and what role the child plays in this order. Particular attention will be paid to these aspects of culture: concept of the self, family and kinship structure, social hierarchy, and beliefs and values.

## The Corpus

The corpus consists of six Chinese school textbooks; and six Chinese story books, which are commonly read outside the school.

The textbooks are published locally, approved by the Hong Kong Education Department, and widely used by the primary schools in Hong Kong. Each textbook is composed of 28-30 units. Each unit begins with a short text, usually narrative, but occasionally expository or

* This paper is the revised version of a paper presented at the 23rd International Systemic Functional Congress, University of Technology Sydney, July 15-19, 1996.

literary in nature. This is followed by reading comprehension, extensive language practice and various language activities. The present analysis is based on the texts (a total of 176) only.

The story books were selected on a single visit to a major urban library in Hong Kong. All of them satisfied the following criteria which had been set before the visit:

- the genre is narrative
  All the books were written in the narrative genre which is appropriate for the present study. As noted by a number of scholars, the narrative plays a powerful role in childhood socialization (Miller et al 1990:294-295) and it is a discourse structure or genre which reflects culture. (Cortazzi 1993:101)
- focus on the culture studied
  All the books were written in Chinese. Books that were translated from non-Chinese languages were excluded.
- distinctiveness of the culture studied
  All the books were locally written and published. Books from Taiwan or Mainland China were excluded.
- popularity
  The loan record was checked. The number of times these books were lent out and presumably read at home exceeded 12 in the last months. This excluded the time when the books were read in the library. As a matter of fact, two to four copies of each of these books were provided in the same library but only the record on one copy was counted.

Details of the textbooks and story books are given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

## The self, family and kinship structure

A number of scholars have noted the differences in perception between the Chinese and the West of the concept of the self. In the West, the study of "self" has focussed on the concept of "personality" which refers primarily to what goes on inside the individual. This is in great contrast to the Chinese concept of *yan* (*jen/ren*) which is based on the individual's transactions with his/her fellow human beings. (Hsu 1985; Chu 1985; King and Bond 1985) The language used in the texts under study illustrates this point clearly. First, they are marked by relatively little use of personal names. Instead, kinship terms abound in most texts.(See Table 1 opposite.)

The table compares the total number of personal name tokens and the total number of kinship term tokens found in the texts. With the exception of *Modern Chinese Language 1B*, kinship terms appear at a substantially higher frequency rate than personal names (from two-thirds higher to over four times higher). There seems to be a strong preference for identification of and relationship with family members and kinsmen over identification of individuals in these reading materials.

| Textbook | Total Nº of Texts | Total Nº of Personal Name Tokens in Texts | Total Nº of Kinship Term Tokens in Texts |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Chinese Language 1A* | 30 | 17 | 28 |
| *Chinese Language 1B* | 30 | 2 | 55 |
| *Modern Chinese Language 1A* | 30 | 15 | 43 |
| *Modern Chinese Language 1B* | 30 | 46 | 44 |
| *[Kai Si]' Chinese Language 1A* | 28 | 7 | 37 |
| *[Kai Si]* Chinese *Language 1B* | 28 | 10 | 40 |

**Table 1:** Use of Personal Names and Kinship Terms in Textbooks

In all the texts, individual kinship terms which appear most frequently are those related to the immediate family, which is presented as the core of the child's world. The numbers below refer to the numbers of tokens found.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 媽媽 | *maa-maa* [1] | Mother | (86) |
| 弟弟 | *dai-dai* | Younger Brother | (40) |
| 爸爸 | *baa-baa* | Father | (33) |
| 姊姊/姐姐 | *zi-zi /ze-ze* | Elder Sister | (31) |
| 哥哥 | *go-go* | Elder Brother | (23) |
| 媽媽 | *mui-mui* | Younger Sister | (15) |

This relative insignificance of personal names and the pervasiveness of kinship terms are also found in the story books. With the exception of *Daai Hung's Shoes* and *Clever Bui-Bui*, we do not find any personal names. In *the Wanderings of the Little Duck*, only a kinship term is used for the protagonist: the little duck is referred to as 'Little Younger Brother' 小弟弟 throughout the story. In other stories, the protagonists are referred to by their generic terms. For example, in *The Naughty Little Angel*, we do not know the angel's name. He is referred to as 'Little Angel' 小天使 throughout the narrative. In *The Moonlight Lake By Night*, the main character is a personified swan. She is called Swan throughout. In fact, all the story books adopt a naming system which is found to be quite common in Chinese children's stories - a combination of generic term and kinship term as in Examples 1-3.

**Example 1**
兔媽媽
*tou maa-maa*
rabbit mother = Mother Rabbit

牛　伯伯
*ngau baak-baak*
cow father's elder brother　= Uncle Cow

雀　叔叔
*zoek suk-suk*
bird father's younger brother = Uncle Bird

鵝 大嫂
*ngo daai-sou*
goose eldest brother's wife　= Sister-in-law Goose

雞　姨姨
*gai ji-ji*
hen mother's younger sister　= Auntie Hen
(*The Rabbits and the Weeds*)

**Example 2**
鴨 媽媽
*aap maa-maa*
duck mother　= Mother Duck

鵝 媽媽
*ngo maa-maa*
goose mother　= Mother Goose
(*The Wanderings of the Little Duck*)

**Example 3**
獅　叔叔
*si suk-suk*
lion father's younger brother　= Uncle Lion
(*Clever Bui-Bui*)

A similar naming system is found in the personification of inanimate objects in the school textbooks. A category term is combined with a kinship term to form a special way of address or reference as in Examples 4 and 5:

**Example 4**
雲　姐姐
*wan ze-ze*
cloud elder sister　= Sister Cloud

雷　公公
*leoi gung-gung*
thunder mother's fathe r　= Grandpa Thunder
(Lesson 25, *[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1A*)

**Example 5**
冬　妹妹
*dung mui-mui*
winter younger sister　　= Sister Winter
(Lesson 28, *Modern Chinese Language 1A*)

It is obvious that when Chinese children are learning to read in school and at home, they learn to acquire the culture that is embodied in these kinship terms . They learn from an early stage that family members and kinsmen are an inseparable part of one's life. The fact that personal names are not emphasized in primary school textbooks and home reading materials reflects a very important aspect of early socialization. The self is seen as being in relation to significant others. Chu (1985 :253) defines "significant others" as "individuals in the self's social environment with whom he constantly interacts in various kinds of role relations." These "role relations" are of prime importance in the Chinese culture. In the Confucian framework, they are defined as the Five Cardinal Relations, namely, those between

1) sovereign and subject,
2) father and son,
3) elder and younger brother,
4) husband and wife,
5) friend and friend.

(King and Bond 1985: 33-36)

Since the textbooks which we are looking at focus on 2), 3) and 5), I will limit my discussion to these three. But it is to be noted that 1) the relation between sovereign and subject has often been expounded in terms of 2), i.e. the ruler (the emperor in ancient times, or the government in modern times, ) should look after his people as a benevolent father ; whereas the ruled should be loyal to the ruler as a respectful child. Besides, 5) the relation between friend and friend has often been referred to in terms of 3). It is not unusual for close friends to call each other or refer to themselves as *hing-dai* 兄弟 or *zi-mui* 姊妹. This entails expectations of a moral obligation to help or receive help from one's friends, as one would expect from one's brothers and sisters. It is also to be noted that two important role relations seem to be excluded from the cardinal five: stranger and stranger, and, teacher and student. I will discuss the stranger-stranger relation first and then return to the teacher-student relation later when I talk about role expectations and responsibilities.

As we have just seen, role relations in Chinese are often expressed in kinship terms. Since the Chinese social order is based on the kinship system, it would seem very difficult for a Chinese person to establish a relationship with someone outside this kinship boundary. One way to overcome this difficulty is to expand the boundary temporarily to accommodate the stranger. In one of the school texts (given as Example 6 below), we find an illustration of establishing a culturally acceptable relationship with strangers through the kinship system:

**Example 6**
車子　上，人　眞　多。
*ce-zi soeng, jan zan do.*
vehicle on people really many
'It was really crowded on the bus.'

一 位　伯伯　看見　我，

*jat wai baak-baak hon-gin ngo*

one classifier **1.father's elder brother** see me

**'1. A man** saw me'

搖 來　搖 去　站 不 定，

*jiu loi jiu heoi zaam bat ding*

sway come sway go stand not stable

'swaying to and fro and standing unsteadily,'

就 把　座位　讓　給 我。

*zau baa zo-wai joeng kap ngo*

so handle seat give up to me

'so he gave up his seat to me.'

一會兒，

*jat wui-ji*

one moment

'A moment later,'

上 來　一位　　老 婆婆，

*soeng loi jat wai lou po-po*

up come one (classifier) old **2.mother's mother**

**'2. an old woman** got on the bus.'

我 站　起 來　忙　讓　座，

*ngo zaam hei loi mong joeng zo*

I stand rise come hurry give up seat

'I immediately stood up and gave up the seat to her.'

叔叔 阿姨　都　稱讚 我。

*suk-suk aa-ji dou cing-zaan ngo*

**3. father's younger brother 4. mother's younger sister** both praise me

**'3. A man and 4.a woman** praised me.'

(Lesson 9, *Chinese Language 1B*)

Here we see a big contrast in the way strangers are dealt with in the Chinese and translated versions. The English version shows no concern with the relationship between the child and those with whom he is interacting. But in the Chinese text, the generic terms are replaced by kinship terms. The stranger is assigned a temporary place in the kinship system. In fact, it is a common practice among Chinese to refer to and address strangers in kinship terms especially in situations where the contact is brief and the relationship is temporary, for example, in asking a stranger for the way, and in service encounters. Very young children are socialized to adopt this practice in the spoken language. As a general rule, a stranger's correct place in the "relational hierarchy" (Chang and Holt 1994:105) is judged according to his/her perceived age. For example, in the park, when a toddler meets an older child whom he does not know, the younger child is usually taught to address the older child as *go-go* (elder brother) or *ze-ze*

(elder sister). This practice of accommodating strangers temporarily in the kinship system is reinforced in the written language, as we have just seen in the school text.

## Social hierarchy

So far we have observed that in the Chinese culture, the self is a relational being and the organization of relationships is embedded in the family system. Now let us look at what kind of relational organization it is and what roles are entailed in such an organization. The organization is vertical, or hierarchical in nature (Hwang 1987; Chang and Holt 1994). The language itself differentiates the position of each member in this social hierarchy in a very fine way. The age difference has to be shown. So specific kinship terms like "elder/ younger brother" and "elder/ younger sister", instead of general kinship terms like "brother" or "sister" are used in Chinese.

Even the order of birth must be shown. Hence there are discriminatory ordinal kinship terms (e.g. 2nd Elder Brother, 3rd Younger Sister). At the same time, the proximity of the kinship has to be shown. Therefore there are different terms showing whether grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins are on the paternal or maternal side. In this social hierarchy, each person is assigned a specific place. Children are taught to accept this hierarchical nature of relation roles not only when they learn to speak and live as members of the culture, but also as they learn to read and write as literate members of that culture. Very often in children's stories, main characters are named according to their order of birth in the family. In *the Rabbits and the Weeds,* the four rabbit brothers are called according to their birth order:

**Example 7**

| 大　兔 | 大　哥 |
|---|---|
| *daai tou* | *daai go* |
| eldest rabbit | eldest elder brother |
| 二　兔 | 二　哥 |
| *ji tou* | *ji go* |
| second rabbit | second elder brother |
| 三　兔 | 三　哥 |
| *saam tou* | *saam go* |
| third rabbit | third elder brother |
| 四　兔 | 四　哥 |
| *sei tou* | *sei go* |
| fourth rabbit | fourth elder brother |

At this point, I would like to return to the teacher-student relation mentioned earlier. It is one of the most important *jan* relationships. There is an old saying:

一日爲師，

*jat jat wai si*

one day be teacher

終 身 爲 父。

*zung san wai fu*

all life be father

'A person who has been one's teacher (even) for (as short as) a day will be (treated like) one's father for as long as one lives.'

It explains the similarity seen to exist between a father-son relation and a teacher-student relation: the same social roles are expected, i.e. those in the superior positions or in authority are expected to possess the virtue of benevolence by looking after the needs of those in the lower positions, giving them advice, guidance and direction. Those in the lower positions are supposed to show proper respect and deference to those in authority, by listening to their advice and satisfying their demands. Therefore, in the classroom, the teacher is perceived to be the authority figure who will look after her students and take charge whereas students are expected to learn from the teacher and listen to her. (Ho and Crookall 1995). Children are taught respect for the ordering of relations and submission to these fixed social roles throughout the socialization process but particularly after the age of 5. (Ho 1980 cited in King and Bond 1985:34) This is the age when they start to develop their literacy skills. Let us look at how this aspect of the culture is transmitted through the use of grammar and discourse structure.

## Beliefs and values

The school texts show the use of a salient aspect of grammar, modality, to reinforce the social roles and responsibilities expected of a child . When a virtue or desirable behaviour is referred to in the texts, a median - high modal operator is used, as in Examples 8 and 9 (emphasis mine).

**Example 8**

老師說：「好孩子不應該取笑別人。」

'Good children **should** not laugh at others.'

(Lesson 25, *Chinese Language 1A*)

**Example 9**

爸爸說：「你要專心做功課。」

'Father said, "You **must** concentrate on your homework".'

(Lesson 27, Chinese Language 1A )

Sometimes, a mode adjunct of intensity is attached to stress the importance of the proposition, as in Examples 10 and 11 (italics mine).

**Example 10**

丁丁想：「同學們都用心上課，我玩布娃娃，眞不應該。」

'Ding Ding thought: Other classmates are paying attention in class but I am playing with my glove-puppet. This *really* **should** not be (done).'

(Lesson 3, *Chinese Language 1B*)

**Example 11**
我要認眞做好暑期作業，

'I **must** *seriously* do my summer homework.'

(Lesson 28, *Kai Si Chinese Language 1A* )

In contrast to texts involving social or moral behaviour, texts that encourage the child to maintain physical health are presented quite differently. No similar modal operators are employed. Instead, either a simple instruction is given with the positive condition marker "if" as in Example 12 , or factual descriptions of what is done in the form of nursery rhyme and plain imperatives are used, as in Example 13.

**Example 12**
要想身體好，天天做早操。

'If you want to have good health, do morning exercises every day.....'

(Lesson 21, *Chinese Language 1A*)

**Example 13**
好孩子，起得早，天天起來做早操。
彎彎腰，伸伸腿，勤做早操身體好。

'Good children get up early. Everyday they get up and do morning exercises. Bend your backs. Stretch your legs. Be diligent in doing morning exercises and your health will be good.'

(Lesson 9, *[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1A*)

The difference in the choice of these grammatical elements reflects the preoccupation of the culture with values that are associated with moral behaviour and educational achievement (Wu and Tseng 1985; Wu 1994)

Now let us take a look at the discourse organisation of some texts to see how social roles are defined. As Scollon and Scollon (1995) have pointed out, a Chinese speaker usually adopts a "topic-comment" order of presentation in which "the main point (or comment) is deferred until sufficient backgrounding of the topic has been done." (Scollon and Scollon 1995:1) That is, the most central idea, or the most important information is often expressed towards the end. This relationship between discourse structure and cultural meaning is illustrated in Examples 14-16.

**Example 14**
媽媽正在忙著做飯，頑皮的弟弟卻哭著要媽媽和他玩。我對弟弟說：「弟弟乖，不要吵，我和你到外面去玩吧。」
媽媽稱讚我說：「你愛護弟弟，又能夠幫助我，眞是我的好孩子。」

'Mother was busy preparing the meal, but naughty Younger Brother cried, whining that Mother play with him. I said to Brother, "Be good, Brother. Don't cry. I'll take you out and play with you."
Mother praised me, saying,"You love your brother, and you can help me. You are really my good child".'

(Lesson 11, *Chinese Language 1B*)

In this example, a familiar family scene in which a young child is pestering a busy mother is presented. By depicting the elder child as the next figure in authority within the relational hierarchy, and making him fulfill the expected role of alleviating parental burden and looking after those "below" him, a "good child" is defined as one who loves one's younger siblings (thus fulfilling one's obligation of catering for the needs of those under one's authority) and helps one's mother (thus fulfilling the obligation of serving parents in filial piety). This definition is given at the end of the text which normally carries the greatest significance.

**Example 15**

星期日，我們在家裏幫媽媽做家務。
哥哥抹門窗，姐姐洗地板，我和弟弟、
妹妹抹桌椅。門窗、地板和桌椅都清潔了，
我們才休息。媽媽說：「你們都是好孩子。」

'On Sunday, we helped Mother to do the housework at home. Elder Brother wiped the doors and windows, Elder Sister washed the floors, I and Younger Brother and Younger Sister wiped the tables and chairs. We did not rest until all the doors and windows, floors, and tables and chairs were cleaned. Mother said, "You are all good children".'

(Lesson 16, *[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1A*)

This example shows a family with Mother as the core and purpose of the activity: the children gather together to help Mother with the housework. The great efforts and dedication are emphasized in the children's refusal to rest before they accomplish their work. Again, their act of filial piety is explicitly acknowledged in the final comment.

**Example 16**

上課的時候，老師對我們說：「好學生，要用功讀書，
留心聽課。」我要記住老師的話，做個好學生。

'While we were having a lesson, the teacher said to us "Good students must study hard and listen attentively to (explanations of lessons)". I must remember the words of the teacher and be a good student.'

(Lesson 5, *[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1A*)

The teacher's definition of "good students" is embedded in the highly valued virtue of diligence and the much expected student role of listening to the teacher and learning from her (as previously discussed). These values and expectations are consolidated in the student's response which serves as a comment to the topic initiated by the teacher.

In these examples, the backgrounding is provided in the description of a child helping Mother to look after his younger brother, helping to do the housework, or studying hard. These are often seen as acts of filial piety or submission to the expectations of those in authority. But the comment, the main point is given in the last line of the text : an explicit approval of such acts of filial piety or submission to the demands of the authority , of the social roles that the children have fulfilled or are determined to fulfill. The topic-comment discourse organisation strongly suggests the cultural meanings of "being": what it means to "be" a "good child", what it means to "be" a "good student".

Further examples (17-19) show how the topic-comment order is coupled with a metaphorical use of language to express the importance of role relations.

**Example 17**

明天就要開學了，爸爸送給我一個新書包。
新書包是深綠色的，上面畫著一隻米奇老鼠。米奇
老鼠正吹著一個大氣球，眼睛耳朵都很大，又可笑又
可愛。
我愛我的新書包。

'Tomorrow school will begin. Father has given me a new schoolbag. The new schoolbag is deep green in colour. On it is drawn a Mickey Mouse. The Mickey Mouse is blowing up a big balloon. Both his eyes and ears are very big. He is both funny and lovely. I love my new schoolbag.'

(Lesson 1, *Modern Chinese Language 1B*)

The text begins with a context: start of the school year. Then the action follows: the father gives a schoolbag to his child who will need it for school. Here the father, the authority figure, is seen to be fulfilling his role as the overseer of needs. At the same time, by attaching importance to an object associated with schooling, the father is indicating his demand on the son: he wants him to study hard at school. In a sense, the schoolbag is a symbol both of parental love and demand. The son is supposed to acknowledge his father's benevolent role and his own deferential role. The detailed descriptions of the lovely schoolbag may well be a way to emphasize this acknowledgement which reaches an explicit climax at the end of the text where the son indicates his love for the schoolbag. It is interesting to note that although the figure of the Mickey Mouse is a Western creation, the meaning of the whole text is essentially Chinese.

**Example 18**

我種了一棵小樹，我給它澆水，我給它除草。
小樹一天一天長大。
我是爸爸媽媽的小樹。爸爸媽媽給我吃得飽，
爸爸媽媽給我穿得暖，我也一天一天長大。

'I planted a little tree. I watered it. I weeded it. The little tree grew day by day. I am Father's and Mother's little tree. Father and Mother filled me (with food), Father and Mother warmed me (with clothes), I also grow day by day.'

(Lesson 22, *Chinese Language 1B*)

The parallel construction of the two paragraphs and the use of the metaphor of the "little tree" are quite obvious. In reading this text, a child learns to accept the role of the authority figure as the overseer of needs. The concluding line implies a causal relationship. Children owe their growth, or even their very existence to the benevolence of their parents, in the same way as the little tree owes its to the child's care. Therefore, the self is seen not as an independent entity but rather a being dependent on the care of one's parents. This is the basis of filial piety. Since one owes one's existence and growth to one's parents, one should give what is due to one's parents - loyalty, obedience and deference.

**Example 19**

姐姐有一把美麗的花雨傘。
今天放學的時候，忽然下起雨來。姐姐來接我。她
用花雨傘擋著雨，不讓雨水淋濕我。
我喜歡下雨，我更喜歡姐姐打著美麗的花雨傘，
保護著我，接我回家去。

'My elder sister has a beautiful floral umbrella. Today, when I finished school, it suddenly started to rain. Sister came to take me (home). She blocked the rain with her floral umbrella and would not let the rain pour onto me and make me wet. I like rain. I like Sister opening the beautiful floral umbrella, protecting me and taking me home.'

(Lesson 17, *Chinese Language 1B*)

This text shows the older sister as the benevolent figure both in the literal and symbolic sense. She looks after the need of her younger sister, and protects her from the rain. The rain does, of course refer to the physical downpour but it also strongly suggests the adversities in life. The umbrella, a symbol of the family bond which is the central bond in a child's life and which is reinforced in the final image of homecoming, plays a significant role in the introduction, body and the conclusion of the narrative. In fact, it is the most important cohesive link in the narrative and helps the text evolve round a cultural theme.

## Conclusion

I have shown in this study that one of the most important functions of literacy is to transmit values of a specific culture to those who are learning to become its members. In fact, one of the aims in providing a Chinese programme at school, as laid down in the Syllabuses for Primary Schools by the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Committee (1990:13) is to " cultivate students' moral sense and enable them to acquire a knowledge of Chinese culture". The present case study shows that children do not just learn how to decipher meaning from logographic symbols; they also learn to accept the values and beliefs of the Chinese culture which are embodied in the written language. The lexis, grammar, and discourse structure all teach the child how the Chinese social order is organized and how his or her part is placed in it. Culture is certainly transmitted but whether it is acquired is another matter.

## Notes

1. *Kai Si*, the transliteration of the first two characters of the Chinese title of the book is added in order to distinguish the books from the first two books in the table because both publishers use the same English translations of titles.
2. Throughout this paper, the Cantonese romanization system which was proposed and adopted by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong in 1993 is used.

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## Appendix 1: Textbooks referred to in this study


Chan, W.L. (1995a) 啓思中國語文一上 (*[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1A*) Hong Kong, Oxford University Press.

Chan, W.L. (1995b) 啓思中國語文一下 (*[Kai Si] Chinese Language 1B*) Hong Kong, Oxford University Press.

Chan, Y.L., N.F. Yau, H.C. Lee and S.F. Tang (1991a) 中國語文一上 (*Chinese Language 1A*) Hong Kong, Hong Kong Educational Publishing Co.

Chan, Y.L., N.F. Yau, H.C. Lee and S.F. Tang (1991b) 中國語文一下 (*Chinese Language 1B*) Hong Kong, Hong Kong Educational Publishing Co. 1991

Fong, C.S., A. Nung, Y.M. Choi and C.C. Kwan. (1991a) 現代中國語文一上 (*Modern Chinese Language1A*) Hong Kong, Modern Educational Research Society.

Fong, C.S., A. Nung, Y.M. Choi and C.C. Kwan. (1991B) 現代中國語文一下 (*Modern Chinese Language1B*) Hong Kong, Modern Educational Research Society.


## Appendix 2: Story Books referred to in this study


Fong, K. (1982a) 頑皮的小天使 (*The Naughty Little Angel*) Hong Kong, Sun Ya.

Fong, K. (1982b) 大雄的鞋子 (*Daai Hung's Shoes*) Hong Kong, Sun Ya.

No author (no date a) 月光湖之夜 (*The Moonlight Lake By Night*) Hong Kong, Educational Publishing House.

No author (no date b) 兔子和野草 (*The Rabbits and the Weeds*) Hong Kong, Educational Publishing House.

No author (no date c) 小鴨流浪 (*The Wanderings of the Little Duck*) Hong Kong, Educational Publishing House.

No author (no date d) 聰明的貝貝 (*Clever Bui-Bui*) Hong Kong, Educational Publishing House.


## Acknowledgement


The author is grateful to the Hong Kong Educational Publishing Co., Modern Educational Research Society Ltd. and the Oxford University Press for their permission to reproduce their copyright materials.

# Is there a class in this room?

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## Introduction

When is a classroom not a classroom? Well, actually, it's always a classroom, and there doesn't seem to be much that we, as teachers, can do about that. If this means that the imperatives of classroom practice can overwhelm any attempt to introduce other practices into such a well-disciplined space, it follows that the demands we make on our students, and their attempts to respond adequately to those demands, will always be bound up with pedagogical stakes.

The question of how this might be taken up productively for a discussion of the vexed issue of language and culture teaching is the point of this paper. Using recent elaborations of the concept of genre, we seek to unpack some of the presuppositions entailed in the language/culture nexus, where it is too often assumed that to learn a language is to learn a culture, or (a variation on this) that to master a culture, one must first master the language. Language is not a specular manifestation of culture, any more than culture is a finished masterpiece. We will argue that cultures are made up of intersecting generic practices, some of which are language-based, many of which are not.

Our job as teachers of language and culture is to help students deal effectively with the requirements of different genres. This entails teaching both the recognition of generic diversity, and the understanding that acquiring cultural skills is *not* like painting by numbers, where one follows the model subserviently until the last section is coloured in. More helpful might be the metaphor of the collage — open to additions and changes — where there is no complete, coherent picture, where not everything is visible, but where series of images overlap and interlock in not always predictable configurations, sometimes covering others, sometimes revealing a different perspective when set against the larger background. Part of our job as we see it is to teach our students to cut and paste, to engage with a complex system in evolution, rather than perceiving culture as a finished masterpiece, to be at best forged, at worst admired from afar. Effective language and culture teaching is not just about teaching generic rules, but showing how and where rules can usefully be broken.

We will take as an example a course taught for the first time by the University of Queensland and Queensland University of Technology in 1995. Called *French for Business* (already a

problematic title), it was offered to students of both institutions and from different disciplinary backgrounds and took place in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Queensland, although it was taught by staff from both institutions.[1]

The course was comprised of three hours per week, each hour taught by a different member of staff. For the first hour of alternate weeks, students were to meet with and be addressed by a member of the francophone business community. What this meant (we thought), was that this hour would not count as a standard classroom hour. Our students would interact with the invited guests in a manner which respected the conventions of the French-speaking business world, including those of register, conversational substance and rhetoric. Students would also be asked to dress "in an appropriate fashion".

When, in the first class of the semester, we told the students of our plans, their reactions were mixed. Some expressed surprise, others appeared stunned, or disturbed, and several objected vehemently. Unprepared for the strength of the reactions to the dress code, we were obliged to clarify our position and retreat to more moderate ground: we could not, of course, oblige anyone to do anything to which they had strong objections, but a refusal to "be a team player" would somewhat defeat the purpose of the exercise, which was that the students should put into practice their hard-learned linguistic and cultural skills. The premise of the interrelation of those skills was perhaps taken too much for granted in our planning of the course, and the sudden need to justify it anew to students was disconcerting. The pedagogical strategies and aims of the course relied heavily on the assumption that cultural practices manifest themselves variously and locally — in language practices; in forms of dress and address; in administrative regimes and political manoeuvres, to name but a few — and that we needed to give our students an idea of the range of competencies necessary to getting by in a francophone business context. Clearly, we could never hope to cover the spectrum fully, but by engaging with its complexity and with some of the more noticeable aspects of the terrain, we might equip students with the tools to navigate relatively unscathed through the bumpier spots, and with enough sensitivity to the particularities of the business genre to move between conventions with a minimum of discomfort.[2]

Our attempt to get students to engage appropriately with the generic conventions of business, in French, was to be frustrated from the start, but not because the complexity of those conventions was beyond them. The difficulty lay in the co-existence of different generic requirements, those of the classroom and those of the business seminar, in the same place, and in our failures to deal with that generic mixity in a pedagogically useful way.

## Genre

### Fixity/Mixity

The notion of genre we will adopt for the purposes of this paper assumes that generic mixity is the order of business in any event.[3] Generic mixity must be understood on more than one level: not only does it mean that genres are not impervious to transformation, from within and from without; it also means that genre is not merely a category limited to the classification of texts, but pertains to the writing of texts and their interpretation, social practices and forms of interaction, and even to kinds of linguistic performance; and finally that the notion of genre itself is flexible.

There is a clear classical tradition of regarding genre as normative and descriptive, where those two functions are mutually entailed. In this tradition, genres have representative members, which are representative because they conform perfectly to the genre in question. A text which fails to conform perfectly counts as imperfect. This notion of genre is thus circular, and ultimately unhelpful except as a tool of classification.

If, however, we adopt a notion of generic mixity, we find that it is possible to read a text (performance, interpretation) as belonging to more than one genre at the same time. The tensions produced by multiple generic gestures are one of the things that make a text interesting. Thus tension need not necessarily be thought of as negative. It can indeed be interpreted positively and productively. If *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* did not simultaneously make claims on the genres of fiction and (auto)biography, it could not exist in the form in which it was written. Crucially dependant on both, it weaves a narrative about the story-telling in our lives and the lives in our story-telling which refuses to settle neatly into one or the other of those genres. Alternatively, if we think of the British Airways television advertisement which used the Flower Duet from *Lakmé*, it becomes clear that the desired impact on the consumer depended on the successful contamination of the publicity genre by the operatic, bringing with it a certain set of topoi normally associated with the opera (prestige, elegance, class, and so on). Similarly, our diagnosis of the *French for Business* course will reveal an interesting set of tensions stemming from different generic expectations. Whereas we took generic mixity for granted, there was a lingering desire on the part of some students for the certitudes of generic fixity.

## Genre in the classroom

Why is genre crucial to our discussion of the teaching of language and culture? If we take the genres that inform our cultures to be flexible, multiform and permeable, with various and often incompatible stakes, it follows that there can be no such thing as a monoculture. Our cultures are multigeneric things, fragmented and multifarious, in spite of turgid appeals to the nationalistic, unifying sense of "culture" we hear so often. No national culture is unified by a single purpose, subordinate to a single political and social imperative, immune to marginal interests and contestations of cultural centrality. The generic practices which make up what counts as "a" culture are infinitely varied, such that to assume complete cultural competence is to imagine a person of infinite social flexibility, able to move comfortably and function adequately in the Pauline Hanson Fan Club and as spokesperson for ATSIC, socialise appropriately at Kirribilli House and at the local pub. This is not to say that such people do not exist. Indeed, we are used to seeing, and mistrusting, this kind of multigeneric ease in our politicians. It seems unnatural, because it can be difficult to accept that the social practices we take as central to our lives might in fact be purely conventional (learned forms of behaviour), and that those who can manipulate and manoeuvre amongst them might in fact be socially more successful people. Nonetheless, this multicultural ease is far from being the norm — even if many of us secretly aspire to it — and it is clearly beyond the scope of the language classroom. There are far too many genres to master, and there is no one right and proper place to start.

The kinds of generic skills required for business (or the hospitality industry, or engineering) are therefore teachable from introductory levels on. To assume that we need to wait until

students have achieved advanced linguistic proficiency before they can integrate the "target culture" is to assume that they are not already learning cultural practices from Lesson One (cf. Crozet 1996:40). In French, for instance, learning the crucial distinction between *tu* and *vous* simultaneously marks a linguistic and a cultural particularity. To learn the linguistic skill is to learn a cultural skill, and to buy into a complex network of cultural hurdles (introductions, party etiquette, friendship rituals, differences of register pertaining to different social groups, to class, etc.) organised around formal and informal address. The same applies to the teaching of French for professional/vocational purposes. Students can easily be taught the conventional "linguistic" skills of a standard beginners' course, while at the same time being sensitised to the ways in which those skills intersect with the practices particular to business culture. This would apply to the teaching of *tu/vous*. It would apply to greetings and introductions, to telephone etiquette, filling out forms, letter-writing, and so on. In this sense, therefore, language and culture are interrelated: certain generic practices manifest themselves linguistically.

## French for business

*French for Business* thus teaches a set of generic practices (which might be described generically as skills for doing business). Ultimately, it was decided that we could not presume to cover the range of necessary skills thoroughly (even had it been possible to determine exhaustively what those might be) and that we could at best try to foster the development of skills students could use to recognise the situations where they might be at a loss. We aimed to teach a certain generic sensitivity, which would involve being aware of differences of convention between anglophone and francophone business practices, and indeed between the world of business and the broader social context. Students might thus be expected to respond to new situations with enough adaptability to learn useful responses for the next such occasion.

Unfortunately, we presupposed that very capacity for generic flexibility in the classroom itself. As we noted earlier, students were somewhat thrown by the news that they would have to adapt to new and unusual circumstances in one segment of the course. That some of the students should have been panic-stricken ought to have been predictable, but that potential for alarm was obscured in our planning of the course by our desire for students to use their skills in a context other than that of the classroom. While assuming from the start that we would be teaching generically specific interrelations of linguistic and other cultural practices (as well we might for any French course), we nonetheless disregarded the heterogeneity of genres we were introducing into the same space. A vocational course such as *French for Business* was a new and unusual genre for most of our students, who were grappling with the generic difficulty of having French and Business co-exist in a single course. Being a new genre, it opened up a space for intersections of linguistic and other cultural practices not normally seen in the classroom. It also raised questions about language and culture to which not all the students were equally open. (To what kind of genre might this course belong? Which generic rules will it obey? Will it be a language course, or a business course?) It seems clear now that the physical environment (a Romance Languages department) was seen by many students to define this course as an exercise in linguistic competence. The introduction of "things to do with business" was sometimes taken as an intrusive foreign element, harmless insofar as they might be reduced to vocabulary acquisition.

Yet in addition to this breach of disciplinary boundaries, students were confronted with a breach of institutional boundaries when we brought private enterprise into the academy (a distinction fast disappearing from the Australian tertiary sector). While in any class students might be required to master a range of activities, and a diversity of genres (the essay, the report, the oral presentation, textual or statistical analysis, and so on), that diversity remains subordinate to the governing genre of the classroom with its institutionally sanctioned rewards. In the language classroom, this governing genre also acts as a safety net on language performance: here, mistakes are permissible, even expected. Indeed, the necessary artifices of the language classroom all too often act to keep the target culture at a safe distance.

The reader will note that our uptake of genre makes use of Lyotard's notion of generic stakes, where performance within a genre is said to be controlled by the goal of that genre (cf. Lyotard 1979, 1983). Thus, the goal of the classroom genre might be said to be the achievement of good marks (or as learning, which should ideally translate into good marks); the goal of the job application, employment. But since genres, as defined for this paper, are not impervious, the question that remains is how to deal with the competing generic stakes involved when students are asked to participate in different genres at the same time. Examples of what was taking place elsewhere in the course demonstrate the different degrees of contamination of the classroom genre which, however, was rarely seriously challenged and never totally displaced.

## A day at the office

The part of the course which seemed to correspond most closely to student expectations was the hour in which they worked with a limited, but varied number of what we might call "routines" of everyday French business life. Functional in approach, it took students through such genres as answering the telephone, letter writing and reading job offers. Predictably, this diversity was taken by the students as appropriate to the classroom.

Several remarks are pertinent here. First, readers are reminded that the skills required to negotiate these tasks are not purely linguistic and were not treated as such. Secondly, as is standard language classroom practice, many of the tasks were contextualised within a fictional situation: in this kind of undergraduate course, it cannot always be expected that students will have immediate need for the genres being rehearsed. Even if the teacher recommended that for the CV assignment students prepare their own because it would be "good practice", the necessity of writing about themselves still counted as fiction. We are certainly not railing against this fictionality, but its existence allows us to bring out some moments of generic conflict. It was not always easy to suspend one's belief in the teacher and to substitute for her, as reader of one's letter of application, the phantom figure of an imagined French employer (was it really necessary to translate one's qualifications, a student asked, or to give the international dialling code for Australia?) Then there is always the student who feels badly done by when a (linguistically perfect) amalgamation of textbook examples does not gain perfect marks, and who is never entirely persuaded by the argument that such a hollow repetition would be unlikely to convince anyone to employ her/him. Surely such an exercise is about good marks, not some imaginary position?

Clearly there is some confusion as to the stakes being played for here. If we want our students to rehearse "real" business situations, we need to set up those activities as a game. If

we play this game too well, however, forms of assessment appropriate to the classroom are overtaken by other considerations, as when the teacher is tempted to give a higher mark to a CV which shows a stronger applicant for some (fictional) position, than to one which is as formally and linguistically appropriate, but which just happens to present a less-qualified candidate for the job.

We see therefore, that even in this relatively standard language classroom, the coincidence of pedagogical and business genres brings with it moments of conflict. We can also note that despite the best endeavours of staff and students alike, it is difficult to live out classroom fictions in such a way that the target culture enters the classroom, and is not left "out there". Another way of putting this is that we lack practice in relating what is taking place in a French course to other cultural contexts. This lack, it was thought, would be remedied to some extent by the other parts of the course.

## Paperwork

In some ways, the remaining hour of the course was less obvious, or less predictable. This third component of *French for Business* was not clearly about practising French for business, and this led some students to question its validity. Its aim was to introduce students to reading francophone newspapers, with particular reference to the more challenging aspects of francophone journalism, such as *Le Monde* and the major weekly news magazines. Clearly, it is not enough for students to master a defined range of business skills such as letter writing and report presentation in order to locate themselves successfully in a francophone business environment. There are others factors which differentiate Australian from French business. All other things aside, a student unfamiliar with even the broadest sense of how the French system of government differs from the Australian would be severely underequipped to understand a range of cultural topoi which crop up incessantly in the media, from elections to party political alliances, from seasonal strikes to *la cohabitation.* A further complicating factor is that of European unification, to which so many questions of finance, economics, marketing, distribution etc. are now subordinate. It was thus considered essential that the students be introduced to, and made to engage with, a range of issues and questions concerning France's internal and external relations, and how they might pertain to the doing of business. This involved two kinds of classroom activities: learning about political, social and financial factors, and a set of analytical reading exercises.

Our aim here was to equip the students with tools for finding their way through the kinds of newspaper articles which even an uninitiated Francophone might find intimidating. This again went to our thesis that the genres which the course sought to encompass did not presuppose linguistic mastery. The counterpart to that assumption was that linguistic competence was also not *sufficient* to the acquisition of generic ease. Hence some francophone students had difficulties adapting to certain generic conventions (i.e. those of written as opposed to oral skills, those of formal as opposed to familiar address, etc.), whereas there were non-francophone students familiar with business practices who took up the challenge with fluency and considerable flair.

Yet once again the classroom genre prevailed. Some students had trouble reconciling the two different exercises in that hour with a course called *French for Business*. The real issue was understanding exactly how our classroom activities might themselves be a form of cultural

practice, in both senses of the word: practice *for* the culture and practice *of* the culture. We had trouble making clear that working through a complex newspaper article, isolating difficulties, and following the evolution of a story or the recurrence of certain topoi from week to week, was already an act of cultural engagement. This trouble, we believe, again stemmed from a conception of French culture as being "out there", rather than made up of different kinds of practices, some of which (such as "reading the paper") can be engaged with in the classroom. When this conception goes unchallenged, the classroom remains impervious to the target culture.

## The well dressed explorer

Too often in French courses (as opposed to ESL or community language courses) we find ourselves treating the target culture as being far removed from the classroom. The existence of a francophone business community in Brisbane enabled us (1) to show students that French for Business might be a very useful thing; and (2) to import into the classroom the cultural practices we sought to teach in the other two hours of the course, by contextualising them in a non-fictional way. Classroom culture would, we thought, here be nudged aside by some other genre. Yet our attempt to introduce the "real world" genre into the language classroom compromised the safety net usually provided for students by the classroom genre, and engendered a significant amount of unease, in students, teachers and guests. Students were clearly uncertain about how to perform, the teachers anxious about the students' performance, and some of the guests themselves anxious about their own performance. Some of the most spectacular examples of generic tension also come from this part of the course.

### Terms of address

Obviously the formal *vous* would be the appropriate term of address, and rare would have been the student unable to nominate it, if questioned in metalinguistic mode. Despite this, there was some real anxiety about whether it would be used. In the particular language departments to which these students were accustomed, the informal *tu* was generalised: it is unusual for the students to have cause to use it, outside the realm of the role-play, where there are generally problems with maintaining it. In a role-play, all that is risked is a mild reprimand or some point penalties as appropriate. However, it is not a simple linguistic error: in this "non-classroom" genre with an interlocutor who was not a teacher, the possibility of offence could always arise, with the students being seen as inappropriately familiar rather than grammatically forgetful.

### Assessment

In briefing sessions in the week preceding each guest presentation, groups of students would introduce the field of interest of that guest, his/her business etc. In general, this was done on the basis of information supplied by the guests themselves. The exercise was institutionally validated by "being for marks." Certainly there were those who managed to negotiate the presentation genre with success: who were informative, who had clearly grounded their tutorial presentation in a serious consideration of what would be necessary to the understanding of the forthcoming guest presentation. Such outcomes represented the best of our expectations when designing this part of the course: while these students had not forgotten that this was a piece of assessment, they were also producing very successful informative work, conforming to guidelines other than those set up by the assessment task. But reality bites. There was, for

example, the student who brought her own safety net along for the evening. "I've got to talk about x," she announced "I don't know why, and it's not very interesting, so I thought we'd pretend it's a press conference. *Mesdames et messieurs, je vous ai convoqués ici aujourd'hui....*" Some consternation (amongst teachers *and* students) was caused by this complete refusal to play the "real" game, and by the desire to retreat to the "language classroom" and the mask of the role play - which was obviously where this student had real success. How could she have refused the possibility of, for once, "doing something for real?" And how strange it was, as teachers, to have to penalise this successful example of generic diversity.

While this was one example of failure, other more successful moments were equally prone to generic difficulties. There was some tension about the interpretative position to be adopted, a tension which manifested itself among students and also in the marking of the presentations. To what extent did presenting a company mean the recitation of its publicity materials? What about those critical approaches which would have counted for much in other courses but which would have been inappropriate here? How could one suitably question the discourse of the cosmetics representative and demonstrate to her the problematic assumptions (about the nature of femininity and being Australian) underlying her presentation?

### The venue

Another perceived generic mismatch was that of the venue. The guest sessions were scheduled for a well-used classroom, where the handsome parquetry floor was usually the worse for wear after a day of classes, and where the rows of chairs inevitably tended towards disorder. The problems here were not only ones of "smartness" - which was the concern of the student who raised the point - but went deeper. The physical disposition of the room may not have differed dramatically from that for large meetings, but for our students, ourselves and our guests, it perpetuated the classroom genre, with its focus on one person, and produced difficulties of movement which restricted contact between students and guests. Clearly, the physical and material constraints of our teaching environments are as much a part of the classroom genre as our texts, our course descriptions and assessment procedures.

### The dress code

The inevitable objections on the grounds of equity issues and practicalities merit serious consideration, but insofar as they concern the application of the code are of a different order from those objections which target the validity of its existence. Were staff there to enforce linguistic but not other standards? Not since the bad old days of the sixties have teachers attempted to control forms of dress in the university classroom: we were, in terms of current classroom culture in Australia, behaving with gross generic inappropriateness. Furthermore, not only was our right to set up a dress code questioned, but the reasoning behind it: here we were obviously going too far. Dressing up (in ties) was just going to be dressing up (in costume), and despite its theatricality, a classroom isn't a fancy dress party. There were obviously some serious reservations about playing (in a serious way) with non-verbal identity (which, incidentally, may also be found in courses where gesture is a focus of attention). Finally, there was the objection that the dress code we suggested was the wrong one for the language classroom, and, in the mind of at least one student: "They [the guests] are coming to a university and they expect to see students." Classroom culture would prevail.

## Pedagogical uptakes

We do not want this to be the chronicle of a failure, of a doomed attempt to dream the impossible dream of effacing the classroom culture and substituting for it another, with, as its conclusion, the demonstration of the inevitable generic mixity of classroom activities and the dominance of classroom culture. Rather, we should go on from here to see what can be done with this co-existence of genres, and how the inevitable discomfort might be dealt with helpfully and usefully in terms of the students' on-going apprenticeships. Anne Freadman (1988:6) raises the problem of the "flattening" effect the classroom genre has on generic difference. We suggest that to diminish the effect of these flattening forces, by fighting to validate other genres, logically means that we're in for a bumpy ride. If however, we can succeed in riding the waves thrown up by the clash of generic cross-currents, we may actually get somewhere.

The cosmetic representative's presentation may be taken as one of the more telling examples of student frustration, and of how working through it might feed back into the learning process. Across the corridor, in another room, students would have delighted in the chance to do a feminist analysis of cosmetics advertising. By this stage in the semester, all were aware that this room was not the place to do that, or at least not in the same way. Their problem was to produce a form of reaction which would be appropriate to the business presentation genre and at the same time display a prized set of analytical skills - or at the very least acknowledge the existence of alternative discourses. Any pedagogically useful analysis of the incident would of necessity recognise the double act going on in this particular room. The teacher's job is to help students both to consider the options available to them, and to formulate questions which would satisfy both genres. (Have you had to adapt your marketing strategies for Australian audiences? Does your market research show any resistance to these assumptions about women?)

What the course we describe needed was some sustained pedagogical uptake of moments of tension such as those outlined above. As always, students should be guided towards as precise a diagnosis of difficulties as possible: only when these have some defined form is it possible to tackle them effectively. As we see here, analysis of the conflict, apparent and actual, not only points to the existence of generic difference, but sets up an important lesson in the way we may deal with generic requirements. Learning that generic mixity is inevitable, and that it may be managed productively presupposes that generic practices may be acted upon: generic sensitivity should not be equated with generic docility, or compliant obedience.

Indeed it is at times impossible for Australians, as non-natives, to enact a genre in its fullness. To take an example discussed elsewhere (Hanna 1996:268), Australian hand-writing does not conform to the expectations which underpin the French practice of graphology, widely used in the recruitment process. At stake is the very question of employability. Here, as we suggested to students, non-conformity may be made to work for the foreign applicant. But it in order for it to do so, the student must be prepared to invoke and manipulate the rules of the genre ("*Ayant suivi une formation anglophone, comme vous pourrez le constater à mon écriture...*") (cf. also Freadman 1994:13-18). Such an example, which subtly acknowledges the importance of handwriting while simultaneously avoiding having to produce authentically French script, both works as proof of valuable experience of another culture, and demonstrates

cultural adaptability. On the other hand, s/he who would persist with other Australian rules of letter writing (*Cher Jean* to the C.E.O. one has never met), reluctant to give up on this, and confident that such transgression will be benignly attributed to the "Aussie" character, may be risking too much. The goal of generic appropriateness may therefore be seen to be of strategic importance, rather than an end in itself. Informed non-conformity, or considered inappropriateness, may also be a strategically useful move. This has been discussed by Cryle (1992:134), Hanna (1996), and Zarate (1986:32) (see also Freadman 1994:21 on non-obedience).

Being able to invoke generic rules means that these are not the mysteriously inaccessible secrets of a great art work. While we cannot abolish classroom practice, its existence and the tensions it produces may well be a means of bringing to students' attention the existence of genre as something not only in which they are already implicated, but upon which they can act.

## Conclusion

Generic diversity is par for the language course. However that diversity and its seemingly incoherent goals are carefully reined in by the demands of pedagogical viability. A conservative conclusion to this paper could be a simple acknowledgment of the power of classroom culture and of the need for deference to its exigencies. But this would be to gainsay the usefulness of generic tensions in the classroom. While the scenarios we have outlined seem to point to pedagogical difficulties, we hope to have shown that expectations of generic purity are both unrealistic and unhelpful. Generic mixity is and may be managed in different, pedagogically useful ways, but pretending that generic coincidence is an aberration closes the door on potentially fruitful discussions with students of the strategic value of good genre management.

As we asserted earlier, there can be no monoculture. It is important that students be introduced to this fact of cultural competence, equally relevant to understanding their relation to their home culture. In the language classroom, the implications of this must extend to the apprenticeship of the target culture. It must involve a recognition that cultural mastery is not a separate skill which follows sequentially in the footsteps of linguistic mastery. No longer a monolith, the target culture can be revealed as an interlocking series of locally manageable practices, which students can try on without having to change their whole wardrobe.

## Notes

1. In addition to the authors, the course was taught by Professor Peter Cryle (Romance Languages, University of Queensland), on leave at the time of writing.
2. For more on the practices involved and the problems engendered, in a business setting, see Béal (1990, 1992). For another account of factors relevant to the cultural construction of meaning, see Crozet (1996).
3. Our uptake of genre, and its relation to classroom practice, owes much to the work of Anne Freadman, in particular as outlined in Freadman (1994).
4. Freadman (1992: 261) suggests the alternative metaphor of the tramp, or vagabond, as one who looks over other peoples' fences: "the tramp suggests that to know— or practise — a genre is to know and practise the relations it entertains with other genres".

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# Teaching culture and language for specific purposes: an approach to the development of appropriate teaching material

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## Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that a foreign language cannot be taught without integrating the culture connected to the target language (Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff 1990, Byram 1991, Müller-Jacquier 1991, Bolten 1993). However, 'widely acknowledged' does not mean that this integrated approach has entered classrooms, and it is even less adapted when there is not only a second language to be taught, but also a very specific content like a particular profession. Following the approach of the German textbook *Deutsch im Krankenhaus* (Firnhaber-Sensen and Schmidt 1994) the focus of this paper will be on the impact of the components of 1) language, 2) a very specific content and 3) culture on the development of teaching material for specific purposes. Although the approach is illustrated by a concrete case, it can serve as a model for similar projects in other languages and other subjects.

In this paper 'culture' focuses mainly on professional culture, emphasising that it is a widespread myth that the working conditions of a profession are independent of the cultural surroundings in which it is performed. In fact, closer comparisons show that e.g. teachers, bank clerks or nurses do different tasks in different countries, get different salaries and are viewed differently in terms of prestige.

The prestige of a specific profession often depends on historical developments, e.g. to what extent a specific culture established and developed the value of education. The answer to this question determines the length of training, the salary, working conditions, the discourse level (Clyne 1994) etc. In Germany, where school education is highly regarded, the teaching profession is a prestigious one, well-paid and requiring a long academic training. Within the nursing profession it is quite the opposite. While Australian nurses gain their qualifications through university studies and are regarded as highly skilled, German nurses get a non-academic training, are low-paid and find themselves at the very bottom of the hospital hierarchy.

Hence teaching a language for professional purposes must not ignore these differences in the professional culture.

## Special subject language vs. language for professional purposes

In order to avoid misunderstandings in terminology some comments on the use of the term 'special subject language' should be made in advance. Most teaching material developed for specific purposes is labelled under the term 'special subject language'. The project that is described in this paper does not use this term for two reasons. According to Bolten (1991) there is no clear-cut border between 'general language' and 'special subject language'. For example, how should a newspaper article on the political discussion of abortion be classified? Can the language used in this article be strictly defined as medical, political or general language? It is obvious that the categories are overlapping and therefore do not help to solve the problem. Second, Bolten argues that the term 'special subject language' is used for very contradictory definitions. It is used both for describing a lexicological-terminological system and for describing linguistic performance in a communicative-pragmatic sense.

Being aware of these incompatible definitions Bolten suggests an end to using 'special subject language' as a general term, because it is too hackneyed. Instead he suggests to use the following three terms:

- *Academic Language* used in educational contexts;
- *Language for Professional Purposes* used in a professional context; and
- *Informal Subject Language* used between experts and non-experts.

The teaching material developed in the project *German for Foreign Nursing Staff* falls into the second group.

## How does the demand for specific teaching material arise and what happens when culture is ignored in a language curriculum?

The demand for very specific teaching material arises from very concrete situations that are mostly problematic. In the project *German for Foreign Nursing Staff* it arose from the fact that in the late eighties and early nineties there was a dramatic shortage of qualified nursing staff at German hospitals. To solve the problem many hospitals recruited nursing staff from abroad, mainly from the former Yugoslavia, the Philippines and Great Britain. The recruited nurses were highly skilled, but hospital officials had completely ignored two key issues: language and culture.

Most of the foreign nurses did not have sufficient knowledge of the German language, in fact many did not know any German at all. Becoming aware of this problem, hospitals organised six-weeks intensive language courses, naively believing that such a short period would be sufficient to acquire enough linguistic skills to perform successfully in a work environment.

It seemed that the problems that occurred at hospitals with foreign nursing staff were caused by the lack of linguistic proficiency, but after interviewing representatives from those hospitals

involved it soon became clear that the problem was far more complex. It seemed much more likely that many problems were caused by cultural differences, especially by the different image and content of one profession in different cultures.

For example, the majority of the foreign nursing staff working at German hospitals comes from south-eastern European countries, where nursing of ill people is done by the family, while the nurses are much more involved in medical tasks. Because of this cultural difference foreign nurses often do not regard tasks which are less specifically medical work, like washing and feeding patients, as work they should do.

In this case ignoring language and culture led to a very frustrating and explosive situation for all involved:

- on the one hand, the foreign nurses were unsatisfied with their job, because they were only allowed to do work with fewer responsibilities than in their own countries
- on the other hand, the German staff felt that their new colleagues were not a lot of help and
- last but not least, the patients were nursed by staff with whom they could not communicate.

## The development of teaching material for specific purposes integrating language and culture

The situation as described got more and more out of control until finally the Department of Science and Research of North-Rhine Westphalia initiated a project on the development of appropriate teaching material for this very specific group of learners. The project was conducted by the Heinrich-Heine-University of Düsseldorf in close cooperation with professional experts.

The first question was which topics, material, text types etc. should be chosen. The aim was to present communicative situations, texts and exercises which were as realistic and authentic as possible. Above all, they had to be both representative and significant.

Former research activities on the language used in medicine focused mainly on the medical terminology and did not consider linguistic performance and cultural differences. To achieve more information about the latter an empirical survey was conducted at several hospitals. The following questions were of central interest:

- Which are the main *areas of activities* in communication?
- Who are the *partners in communication* in these situations ?
- Which *text types* are used *in written communication* and how frequently?
- Which text types occur as *reading texts* and how frequently?

After an evaluation of approximately two hundred questionnaires the first result was a profile of activities (Figure 1).

One result was very surprising. It had not been expected that one of the most frequent activities would be telephoning, which is understandable, because many appointments have to be arranged by nurses. Except for paperwork, all of the other activities mentioned as very relevant are tasks which require direct contact with patients and hence require communicative skills.

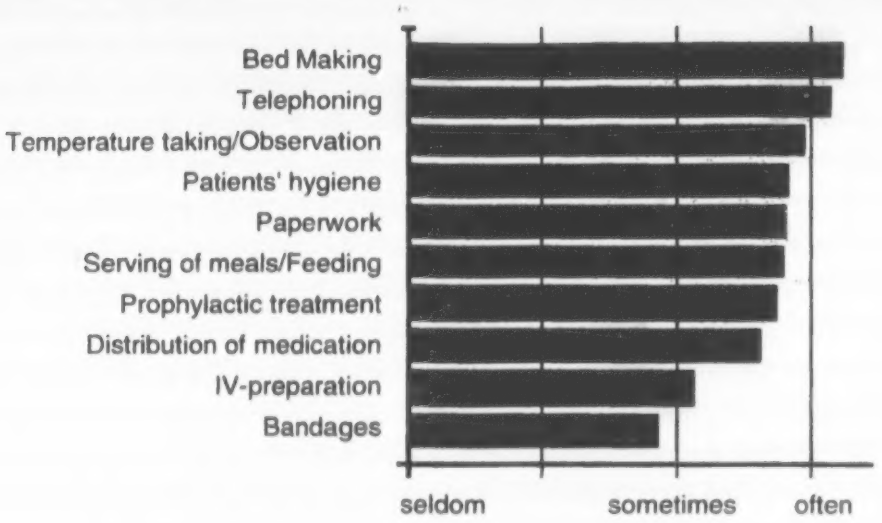


**Figure 1:** Profile of Activities

**Figure 2:** Partners in Communication

With regard to the partners in communication the results correspond with the profile of activities. Patients are in most cases the partners of interaction and are therefore mentioned nearly as often as colleagues who are on the top rank, because many activities, like bed making, are done in cooperation with colleagues. This information about partners in communication was very important for choosing relevant and significant characters in dialogues.

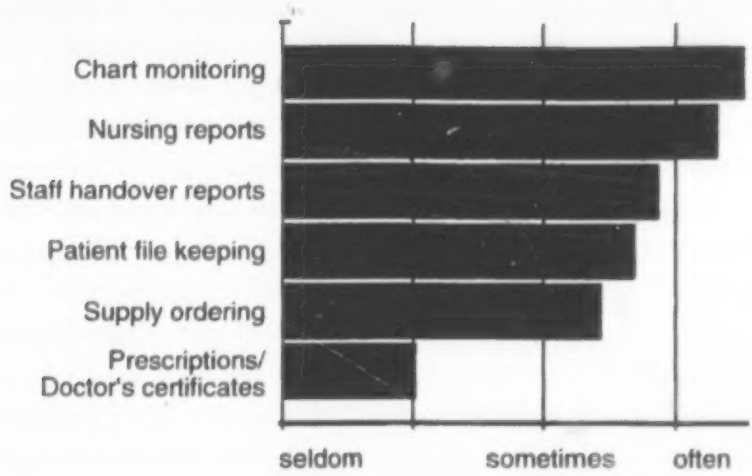


**Figure 3:** Text Types in Written Communication

As far as writing is concerned it was found that filling out forms and writing nursing reports are most important. Both text types differ to a large extent from texts which usually occur in textbooks. By contrast, forms and nursing reports require very specific skills in writing. Knowing the numbers and the correct use of abbreviations is more important than the ability to construct 'complete sentences'. To prepare students for these tasks many exercises start with a listening text and the learners are asked to take notes and later to transfer the information to charts and forms.

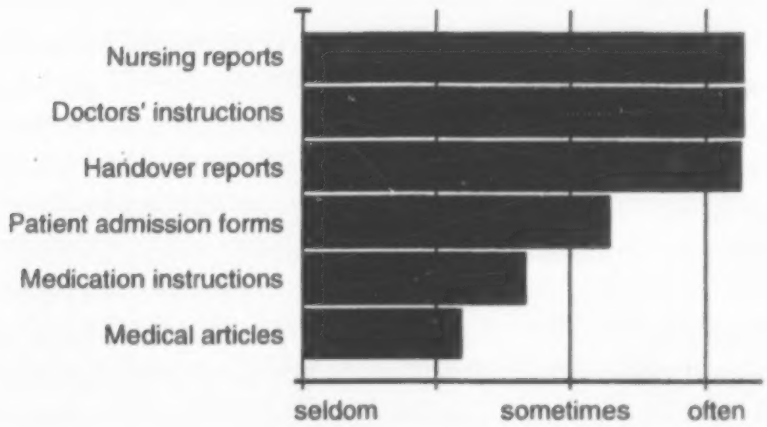


**Figure 4:** Reading Texts

With regard to reading comprehension the information gained showed that articles from scientific journals, for instance, are not read frequently, whereas simple nursing reports and instructions given by doctors are much more relevant. This result supported the authors' choice of presenting a wide range of authentic texts while texts with a rather scientific orientation do not occur.

Altogether the survey can be considered as important for many decisions that had to be taken in the process of constructing the textbook. The results helped to avoid developing yet another textbook which professional experts might consider to be unrealistic and therefore not useful. Furthermore, the results supported the authors in defending their approach against criticisms from colleagues and editors.

## Coursebook conception

Having gained these results a scheme for twelve chapters was developed. For each chapter a very general topic was chosen which was matched with an example for communication and a concrete speech act. The selection of topics and communicative situations is based upon the results of the survey. All topics deal with everyday situations like making beds, distributing meals etc. Because of the significance of telephoning a whole chapter was developed on this topic.

The next question was which speech devices, which vocabulary and which grammatical structures are necessary to perform successfully in each situation. The material was developed for beginners with very little prior knowledge of German. The progression of grammar is oriented towards the basics of German grammar *and* the particularities of the language for this specific purpose, like the passive voice in present tense, which is often used in this context.

As much as possible each grammatical issue is matched with a corresponding speech device. For example, most German verbs used in the context of making beds are separable or non-separable verbs (e.g. *ab*ziehen, *be*ziehen, *auf*schütteln etc.).

With regard to vocabulary it was less important to introduce medical terminology than to draw attention to the appropriate German synonyms. In contrast to other languages the medical terms of Greek or Latin origin do not belong to everyday German. Hence, the synonyms are necessary for the communication between nursing staff and patients.

The last two areas dealt with 1) specific skills, like pitfalls of numbers, abbreviations and filling out forms, and 2) cultural differences and etiquette.

An example of one chapter integrating language, content and culture is illustrated by Figure 5 below.

| **Topics** | **Examples of communication** | **Speech events** | **Speech devices** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bed Making | Bed making in the morning | Cooperating with colleagues | "Could you please get up?" |
| **Vocabulary** | **Grammar** | **Specific skills** | **Cultural differences** |
| Bedding | Separable verbs | | Emphasis on nursing tasks |

**Figure 5:** Chapter 3

## Integrating culture

The approach for integrating and teaching culture into teaching material for specific purposes can be divided into three steps:

1. Giving information about the new culture
2. Encouraging a comparison between the new culture and one's own cultural background
3. Exposing learners to semi-authentic situations

These steps are discussed below.

### Giving information about the new culture

Although the whole coursebook reflects the image of the profession of nursing staff in Germany, most obvious cultural differences are pointed out. For example, German hospitals are structured very hierarchically which is reflected in the ways of addressing each other. Not knowing these unspoken rules can cause problems with colleagues or superiors. To prevent the latter the coursebook contains many dialogues which show how to address someone in a formal (*Sie*) or informal (*du*) situation.

Another exercise to illustrate the hierarchical structure is a pyramid graph in which learners have to fill in the different professions, departments and tasks represented in a hospital (see Figure 6). For learners who are not familiar with the German hospital structure this exercise is very difficult, but teachers are meant to encourage their learners to 'have a guess'. Exploring and discussing why answers are wrong provide a good starting point for cultural comparisons.

**1A** **Aller Anfang ist schwer**

**A 2 Die Hierarchie der Krankenschwestern und Krankenpfleger in Deutschland. Schreiben Sie bitte die Wörter in die Grafik.**

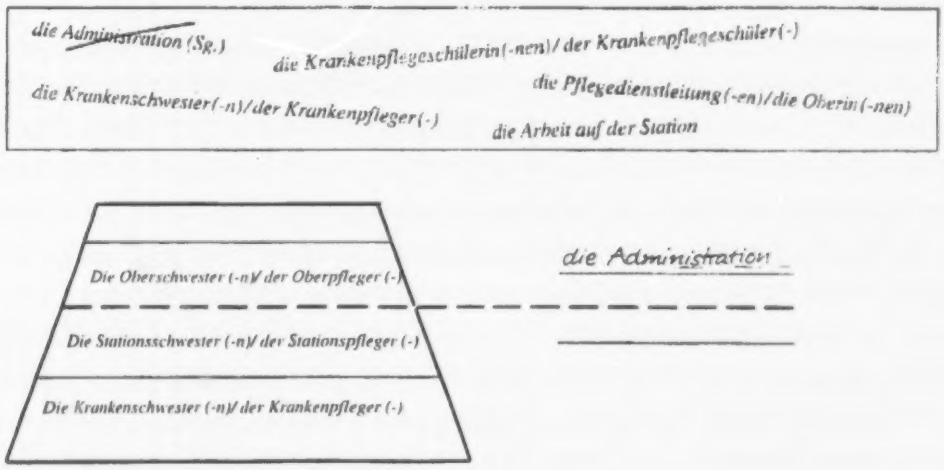
die Administration (Sg.)
die Krankenpflegeschülerin(-nen)/ der Krankenpflegeschüler(-)
die Pflegedienstleitung(-en)/die Oberin(-nen)
die Krankenschwester(-n)/der Krankenpfleger(-)
die Arbeit auf der Station
Die Oberschwester (-n)/ der Oberpfleger (-)
die Administration
Die Stationsschwester (-n)/ der Stationspfleger (-)
Die Krankenschwester (-n)/ der Krankenpfleger (-)

**Figure 6:** Pyramid graph

Furthermore, important cultural differences are summarised in so-called 'memory boxes', little double-framed boxes which draw special attention to cultural differences that occur in dialogues and exercises without being discussed.

**Figure 7:** Memory box

Cultural differences in texts are illustrated by presenting only authentic texts such as patient admission forms, medication instructions etc.

## Encouraging a comparison between the new culture and one's own cultural background

Having sensitized learners to new cultural norms, the next step is to encourage them to compare this new knowledge with their own cultural background. This comparison helps to identify possible 'critical incidents' which are in most cases responsible for problems in intercultural contacts. At the same time comparative exercises enable learners "to deconstruct their monolingual and monocultural world view" (Crozet 1996). Comparisons can be initiated through simple discussions or authentic audio-visual material.

Most materials developed for teaching a second language stop at this step ignoring the fact that being aware of one's own cultural background and of the cultural codes of a different culture does not show what is going to happen when these two cultures interact with each other (Bolten 1993).

Although there has not been much research in this area so far, some interactive approaches (Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff 1990) have shown that intercultural communication does not necessarily reflect the cultural norms of the cultures being involved. Instead, intercultural communication is a dynamic process which is to a large extent determined by 'expectations of being different'. A German patient most likely does not expect a foreign nurse to behave like a German and vice versa. The expectations on both sides are different and hard to predict.

With regard to this unpredictability it is necessary to support learners in developing a cultural awareness by developing strategies for responding to intercultural situations. The third step, therefore, involves exposing the learners to such situations.

## Exposing learners to semi-authentic situations in which they are confronted with different cultural behaviour

This confrontation usually takes place in role-plays, which allow learners to practise and experience new behaviour through learning-by-doing in a safe environment (Crozet 1996).

One example taken from the coursebook *Deutsch im Krankenhaus* is an exercise in which the learners are to cope with three different patients, who are all very difficult to handle. The task is to simulate the situation and to react to the patients. While two students play the situation the others are observers and are meant to take notes about the scene. An evaluation card in the book gives criteria for observation, e.g. does the nurse communicate sufficiently and loudly enough with the patient, etc. (see Figure 8).

B 5 **Überlegen Sie bitte in der Gruppe, wie Sie als Krankenschwester/-pfleger mit folgenden Patienten umgehen:**

Patient A
– macht nicht richtig mit
– ist schläfrig und schwer zu aktivieren

Patient B
– ist sehr sensibel
– fängt schnell an zu weinen

Patient C
– ist sehr negativ
– schimpft über alles

**Bilden Sie bitte Paare, spielen Sie jeder einmal Krankenschwester und einmal einen beschrieben Patienten. Die Aufgabe der Krankenschwester ist, den Patienten im Bett zu waschen und zu versorgen.**
**Schauen Sie sich bitte vorher die Beobachtungskarte an, auf der andere Kursteilnehmer ihre Beobachtungen über das Verhalten der Krankenschwester dokumentieren.**

| Name: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Er/sie geht auf die Probleme des Patienten ein: | gar nicht ☐ | wenig ☐ | gut ☐ | sehr gut ☐ |
| Er/sie aktiviert ihn zur Mitarbeit: | gar nicht ☐ | wenig ☐ | gut ☐ | sehr gut ☐ |
| Er/sie informiert ihn über die Maßnahmen: | gar nicht ☐ | wenig ☐ | meistens ☐ | immer ☐ |
| Er/sie spricht mit dem Patienten: | gar nicht ☐ | wenig ☐ | viel ☐ | sehr viel ☐ |
| Er/sie spricht mit dem Patienten: | zu leise ☐ | gut ☐ | | zu laut ☐ |

**Tauschen Sie bitte nach dem Rollenspiel Ihre Ergebnisse aus, und überlegen Sie sich, wie man gegenüber dem Patienten das eine oder andere besser machen könnte.**

**Figure 8:** Evaluation card for observation

## Conclusion

Second language teaching for professional purposes is different from more general language teaching situations, because it has to prepare learners in a limited period of time for very specific tasks which often carry a lot of responsibility. The development of appropriate teaching material requires cooperation between language and professional experts. Furthermore, in order to be able to choose significant topics, communicative situations and texts, surveys have to be carried out whenever new materials are developed. Ignoring the cultural dimension by only focusing on language and content can cause crucial consequences. The chosen material and types of exercises must integrate all three components: language, content and culture.

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# Developing pathways for conceptualising the integration of culture-and-language for culture-and-language teachers

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## Background to the development of conceptual pathways

The process of developing pathways for conceptualising the integration of culture and language for use in the classroom by language-and-culture teachers in the context of their own professional development has been reciprocal in nature. Its basic aims have been: on the one hand, to develop pathways for teachers to understand and interact with the multiple perspectives involved in all discussions about 'culture', 'language', linguistic and cultural practices, no matter what language and culture one teaches, and, thus, become motivated to explore how cultural and linguistic practices are integral to the function of communication in all human societies; and on the other hand, for the developers: (a) to be informed of the approaches classroom teachers already employ in teaching their specific target languages and cultures through direct observation and videotaping of actual classroom learning in selected schools in South Australia; (b) to continue to reflect on teacher education, recognising that teachers are central in the educative process.

Close cooperation with culture and language classroom teachers has been of primary importance for the development and writing of the pathways. The examples and approaches provided in the accompanying video exemplify some of the authentic practices in the context of language and culture classrooms, indicating how even culture-specific contexts and subtexts are connected to the use of language which gives expression to cultural practices in all cultures. By signalling repeatedly the critical contribution of language use in shaping and colouring the cultural practices in question, language and culture teachers are invited to self-reflect on their own daily linguistic and cultural practices as members of what they define as their primary culture and on their role as educators.

The observation and documentation of current teacher practice in some schools in South Australia has provided a common space for developing reciprocal interaction, dialogue, and inter-cultural exchange among teachers of a range of languages and cultures. The conceptual pathways presented provide an open and permeable process of cross-cultural thinking and bridging through teacher participation and reflection by combining key concepts for reflection, discussion, interaction, participation and engagement through tasks, and critical examination and analysis of authentic classroom examples of integration of culture and language learning.

The collaboration with practising teachers has been based on: (i) the expressed needs of teachers in all systems to explore and develop 'understanding' of culture-in-language and language-in-culture, universally speaking, in order to provide their learners with specific examples associated with the cultural practices in the target languages and cultures; and (ii) on the tacit understanding that many practising teachers already incorporate aspects of socio-cultural learning in their target language classes, but in an incidental manner, based on acknowledgment of deficit in the framework of outcomes in the nationally developed *Statements & Profiles for Languages* (or their state-based equivalents) used by teachers in Australian schools.[1]

The basis for selecting teachers to be videotaped in the classroom was their willingness to participate in the reciprocal development of the conceptual pathways, especially when teacher practice included some level of integration of language and culture in context. Two primary and five secondary teachers agreed to collaborate and arrangements were made for videotaping their classes. Subsequently, these teachers were asked to participate in a group discussion forum in which each teacher presented, explained and analysed his/her videotaped lesson sharing in the reciprocal discussion on common issues.[2] This discussion was videotaped, the audio part of which functions as the voice-over for the edited video accompanying the complete resource.

## Components of the resource

### (A) The book

One component of the resource is the conceptual journey with the title: *Integrating Culture Learning in the Languages Classroom: a multi-perspective conceptual journey for teachers* (Papademetre and Scarino, 2000). In this journey teachers are invited not only to explore the fundamental concepts of language and culture in universal terms and in relation to their teaching language(s) and culture(s) in the classroom, but also to reflect on the notion of journey, discovery and the processes involved in linguistic representation and metacognitive awareness. The discussion endeavours to create a multiple, wide, and as inclusive as possible space for interaction vis-a-vis the interface of language and culture learning at every level of schooling for every language and culture teacher. [3]

This component is intended as a journey for the teacher's development of and reflection upon multiple perspectives into concepts, processes and issues that the scholarship associated with the relevant academic fields has been providing. The form of discourse adopted for integrating language and culture learning in classroom teaching is based on dialogue and reciprocal, active participation between the writers and the readers.

Teachers are encouraged to keep questioning, discussing, and analysing the construction of concepts and their meanings associated even with the words *language* and *culture* as they apply widely in various human societies and compare these words and concepts to the meanings ascribed to them by the relevant scholarship.

The following cultural foci have been included in order to provide teachers with a multi-dimensional perspective on the integration of language and culture, in theory and practice:

(a) the scientific perspectives based on the disciplines: socio-, psycho-, and inter-cultural linguistics, social anthropology, history, cultural studies, pedagogy (teaching resources)

(b) the views and perspectives of target languages and cultures **from outside** (European or 'other', and/or trans-oceanic dimensions)

(c) the views and perspectives of target languages and cultures **from within** (the 'indigenous', including the 'minorities' views.)

(d) the views and perspectives of target languages and cultures **from its own diaspora,** (the intra-cultural dimension; for example, the view of Chinese, or Greeks, or Italians, or Polish, or English living in Australia, the Americas, or elsewhere and away from their respective, self-perceived 'metropolis-of- culture' in Asia or Europe).

In this regard, the words used for coining the concept of **culture** or **civilisation** across languages, not only in English, are brought into question in relative terms by asking the teachers to analyse the linguistic boundaries imposed by such lexical items when they function as tools of reference and inference and thus employed by every language system. Teachers are asked to consider the language-culture-specific words and their associated meanings in view of multiple connotations co-existing from language to language.

For example: *bun-ka, bun-mei* in Japanese; *wen-hua, wen-ming* in Chinese; *koultoura, politismos* in Greek; *Kultur, Zivilisation* in German; *culture, civilisation* in French; or *adab, budaya, peran, kean, sivilisasi, peradaban, kesopanan, kebudayaan* in Indonesian.

In this journey of conceptualising, the participating teacher is invited to observe and analyse critically the universally similar or different *cultural practices* entailed in *linguistic usages* and conversely. Comparing and contrasting cultural phenomena and their associated linguistic meanings across cultures offers participating teachers the opportunity to reflect on their own target culture(s)/language(s) and, thus, view and practise language and culture within multi-perspectives even within one linguistic system.

Fundamental to the aims of this journey is the tacit agreement that scholars representing various disciplines view language and culture learning and teaching in a multiplicity of ways in their effort to understand all contexts of communication which are basically human-centred and therefore human-biased.

An integral part of this journey, involves the examination of our own linguistic and cultural practices as members of the human society at large because our own practices cannot be divorced from the act of teaching our own respective target language(s) and culture(s).

Teachers are invited here to enter a space of collaboration, reciprocal, critical self-evaluation and negotiation by providing their additions, deletions, corrections, etc. to the conceptual pathways presented and challenge any narrow-mindedness, overt or covert, they discover in them. They are **to engage** with what *is* there as well as what *is not* there.

For the **engagement** to be fruitful and sustainable, teachers are encouraged to apply a multiple perspective on language and culture to their own target language(s)/ culture(s) not

only by comparing and re-assessing their own practice but by experimenting with creation of own resources, and activities drawing upon the examples provided and suggested from many cultures. **Engagement** in this journey must translate into immediate application in the target language and culture classroom over at least a term , a semester, or a year depending on the nature of individual practice.

To facilitate this **engagement**, each section in this component of the resource has been structured as follows:

*main text:* discussion on language and culture ; interface of language and culture in context

*text on left margins:* questions for self-reflection for the teacher; further examples for the teacher to consider; selected quotations from scholars elaborating a theoretical point; references for viewing a relevant lesson in the accompanying video; etc.

*re-visiting:* re-vision of the main points explored in the main text

*interactions:* tasks to involve the teacher directly in further exploration

*connecting with the scholarship :* references to the scholarship related to each section

After an introduction, there are three main sections to the journey meant to be studied sequentially by teachers who wish to participate through **personal engagement** and interaction that goes beyond perceived boundaries of a target language and culture. Examples from a range of cultures are presented and discussed but it is not intended that they be comprehensive or exhaustive. Fundamental remains the belief that by evolving a multi-perspective dynamically into one's own language and culture teaching practice, the associative paths learned by taking this journey will always assist teachers in extending, as far as personally possible, own boundaries of knowledge about human nature as conceived and expressed through its linguistic and socio-cultural practices and about the human socio-linguistic constructs resulting from such practices. For conceptual pathways are interconnected bridges providing 'pathfinding' skills associated with navigation as a critical process in all educative endeavours.

## (B) The video

The other component of the resource is the edited video *Consider Language and Culture Teaching: teachers' practice, perspectives, reflections.* These authentic examples of videotaped teacher-student interactions provide a visual text of reference for the study and analysis of language-and-culture teaching and learning in some classroom contexts and can be used as a basis to facilitate individual and collective comparison of shared approaches in the teaching of language and culture across a variety of languages and cultures. The following languages and cultures are represented in order of level and appearance in the video: Pitjantjatjara (Year 4-5), Japanese (Year 5-6), Chinese (Year-8), Spanish (Year- 9, and Year-10 ), French (Year-11), Chinese (Year-12).

Through videotaping classroom activities in the various languages, participants in the development of the pathways were able to study and analyse not only individual classroom teaching of language and culture but also the way it is conceptualised and applied by different teachers with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and professional training. The various resources employed for each level of learners, and the degree of integration of language and culture learning provided by the teachers became easier to ascertain through the objectivity offered by video-recording, which encourages self-criticism as well as individual and collective self- adjusting skills as a desired aspect of professional development. [4]

## Discussion on the question of socio-linguistic and intercultural education of teachers

Throughout the development of the conceptual pathways for integrating culture and language teaching and learning, the following rationale with two basic dimensions has been (and still is) motivating the developers as teachers themselves:

### *First*, the ethical, thus, philosophical dimension:

Conceptually and practically an 'other' culture and language teacher should be constantly concerned with the function of *multiple bodies of texts* as meaning-makers for the learner. Humans universally share the means of sensing, communicating, and perceiving each other's multi-contexts of culture; for, it is in the human nature to create a depository of culturally-relevant meanings in order to provide the fundamental textual means for one another to encode and decode, transfer and translate linguistic signs in a communicative sense. All teaching-learning classroom environments should mediate this natural creation of cultural meanings necessary for all humans **to engage** in culturally-meaningful communicative interaction.

### *Second*, the professional dimension:

At what level do I (we) have a professional concern with acquiring and mediating knowledge about languages and cultures anywhere, no matter the actual place of employment? I can only speak for myself (as any professional self-respecting teacher should) based on a 30-year experience as a learner and teacher of languages, cultures, and inter- and cross-cultural communication in three continents , and in the last fifteen years, a direct involvement with language-and-culture teacher education in Australia — a specific locus with a self-proclaimed pride in its ideological base of 'multicultural policy' in human rights, especially in education since the socio-political and educational reforms of the late 1970s.

Because of its socio-political base, my concern with languages-and-cultures education in Australia involves me directly when I pose the following questions: how exactly do I as a language-and-culture teacher and teacher facilitator engage with the 'ideology of multicultural policy' in education? how exactly, in the last 20 years, has the same 'ideology' been made part of the education and preparation of teachers of languages and cultures currently in the field and with which I now collaborate in conceptualising the integration of culture and language in their classrooms? how exactly has 'multi-cultural rhetoric' on languages and cultures learning been translated into cross-cultural and inter-cultural practice for the education of teachers, and for the education of their educators, their facilitators in the art of classroom teaching? how influential for the facilitators has been the following epistemological stance towards language teacher education based on academic discipline and scholarship and still practised among tertiary educators in English-speaking countries?

> Applied linguistics, research in second language acquisition, and methodology each contribute to the knowledge on which language teaching is based, but they are not, and must not be, confused with language teaching itself. They are ancillary to it and thus they should **not** be the primary subject of language teacher education.
>
> ( Freeman , 1989:29 )

How influential for teacher facilitators is the procedural argument put forward by the same author five years later to clarify his epistemological stance?

> In 1989, I made a statement that has come back to haunt me....I argued that the knowledge that teachers use in teaching languages differs from the disciplinary knowledge that commonly defines the field..... To get to the point, however, we need to recognize that arguments over the role and contributions of disciplinary knowledge in language teaching are, in many ways, independent of the teaching itself. To articulate a knowledge base I have suggested that we must begin with the activity of language teaching, the context in which it is practiced, and the teacher as participant. However, insofar as the teaching and the taught are inseparable, we must understand what makes teaching *language* teaching. This will undoubtedly involve discipline-derived understandings from applied linguistics, second language acquisition, psychology, and curriculum development, among other areas, in a deeper examination of our subject matter.
>
> (Freeman, 1994:180, 195)

As a practising advocate of inter- and cross-cultural and linguistic engagement on issues concerning language-and-culture teacher education — and working with practising language-and-culture teachers in Australia for the purpose of resourcing myself as a teacher facilitator of "the activity of language teaching, the context in which it is practiced, and the teacher as participant" —, I question any adherence to an epistemological positioning based on a procedural argument in the field of language-and-culture-teacher education on the following grounds: how critically would a teacher educator and facilitator adopt a "discipline-*derived*" understanding of language and culture teaching and learning, especially when that discipline is borrowed not studied and practised by the educator and facilitator? what are the ramifications of 'second-hand' involvement with "discipline-derived understandings" for language-and-culture teachers who depend for their study programs, degrees and awards on tertiary education departments subject to federal socio-political and economic objectives and therefore not funded to offer multi-disciplined training to the language-culture teachers for " a deeper examination of our subject matter"?

For in Australia, any discipline knowledge in basic linguistics (structural or in view of cross-cultural communication), basic cultural and social anthropology, or basic intercultural and cross-linguistic pedagogy is not part of the basic curriculum of language-and-culture teacher training, because such 'base knowledge' is deemed un-necessary to classroom teachers by the designers of those programs and awards — regardless or because of funding, as suits the individual case. Progress and development for language-and-culture teachers in applied linguistics, inter-cultural anthropology, and cross-cultural communication, if taught at all, is relegated to "ancillary" and 'symptomatic' learning in teacher education in many tertiary departments of education, and of languages and literatures, regardless of national and international attention being directed to the critical examination of epistemologies based on either/or cultural values and beliefs in regards to teacher knowledge { cf. "They propose starting with the knowledge; I propose starting with the teacher" (Freeman, 1994:182)} . For example:

> Applied linguists and language teachers can understand one another not so much by informing one another of the results of their expert research, or their professional teaching practices, but by **engaging** together in an intellectual exploration of the historical and the social forces that have shaped their respective discourses. Ultimately what is important for each to understand is not the different answers they give but the different questions they ask.
>
> (Kramsch, 1995:13-14 ) (emphasis added)

So, how do I, a language-and-culture teacher, and a teacher educator and facilitator trained in theoretical and applied linguistics engage with Kramsch's statement ? Let (me) us introspect:

> Whether the language teacher (as myself) can **engage** intellectually and in practice with the applied and theoretical linguist (as myself), would depend on how they (and I) have developed their (and my) respective discourses; on who were their (and my) teachers, their (and my) question-shapers. If their (and my) language-and-culture learning, training, and teaching relies on a combination of personal interests and opportunities, channelling the development of their (and my) human skills through various aspects of linguistic and socio-cultural osmosis, then their (and my) coupling of interests and skills to a continuous involvement with base disciplines would provide them (and me) with a rigorous intellectual flexibility and inquisitiveness to engage their (and my) students in understanding the *how* and *why* , the *what* in the integration of language-and-culture learning in the language-and-culture classroom (and in my language-and-culture teacher education classroom).

So, the question for them (and me) to ask is not so much "different", as it is self-reflecting: Can they (and I) still **engage** intellectually with what Kramsch calls the "current proliferation of metaphors related to language learning and teaching, caused by the growth in the multi-disciplinary interests of researchers and practitioners alike" (ibid)? Have they (have I) been given the tools of the trade, the key(s) of encoding/decoding human communication in its socio-cultural contexts?

Because, if I could due to my **diachronic engagement** with all types of discourse in matters of language and culture by education and training, could the language-and-culture classroom teachers be left out of the **engagement** just because some teacher educators and facilitators did not, or do not engage with multi-disciplined education for themselves and others ?

The classroom teacher in me retorts: Who dominates and controls the discourse on language-and-culture teacher education ? On what epistemological, let alone socio-political and ideological, grounds do such educators preach and practice **engagement**? Is such **engagement** based on shared notions, knowledge and experience of *egalité -raternité* which lead one, teacher and student alike, to *liberté* both personal and collective?

## Coda

In developing pathways for conceptualising the integration of culture-and-language in the classroom, the discourse spectrum made available by the developers to the language-and-culture teacher is presented and discussed as a integral part of a teacher's **engagement** with mediating inter- and cross-cultural learning by providing students with a negotiable space for developing interrelated, multi-disciplined views and shaping interconnected, self-reflected questions within the whole spectrum of relevant factors in human communication.

The invitation to engage has been there all along. Let us engage, won't you?

## Notes

[1] Compare similar discussion on this topic:
"The implementation of the statements and profiles in each of the eight areas of study is one of the major priorities of the Department of Education, Training and Employment. This document aims to support the implementation of the statement and profile for languages other than English, in the areas of sociocultural understandings and cultural awareness through the study of language. The review of the languages statement and profile revealed that this area had not been developed sufficiently to be helpful as a guide to teachers."
["Purpose of this Guide" *Development of Sociocultural Understandings through the Study of Languages.* Anne Pauwels, Diana Eades, Jean Harkins (writing group). Department of Education, Training and Employment, South Australia, 1998.]

[2] Native and non-native speakers of their target language, in the period between March - June, 1998

[3] Its contents are as follows:

*Preface*
*To Fellow Teachers : An Invitation to Discuss.....*
Introduction
The conceptual pathways of the journey
The nature of the journey
References

*Language*
The nature of language
Re-visiting the main points explored in this section
Inter-Actions
Connecting with the scholarship
Further reading and references

*Culture*
What's in a definition?
Definitional 'languages'
'Ethnicity' as an aspect of culture
Re-visiting the main points explored in this section
Inter-Actions
Connecting with the scholarship
Further reading and references

*Some 'Assumptions' and 'Contexts' .....*
Introductory discussion
Engaging with our learning environment
Re-visiting the main points explored in this section
Inter-Actions
Connecting with the scholarship
Further reading and references

*Steps in the Process of Developing the Conceptual Pathways*
References

[4] Cf Papademetre (1998), Mrowa-Hopkins and Papademetre (1995)

## Acknowledgments:

Sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the development of the resource, teachers, students, educators, facilitators, colleagues and friends.

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# *teaching languages, teaching cultures*

Edited by Anthony J.Liddicoat and Chantal Crozet

Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) is now making its way as the emerging new approach to language teaching. At its core what ILT offers is an approach to teaching culture as an integrated part of language, and this has several implications for language teaching pedagogy and practice. Teaching culture in language implies an acknowledgement and understanding of the links between language and culture as well as an understanding of how communication works across cultures. In this sense the integration of culture and language constitutes new teaching content which language teachers need to assess and introduce into their teaching practice. When we introduce culture-in-language as "new content" in the language classroom, this in turn forces the review of the very goals of language learning and the language teaching profession at large.

The paradigm shift Intercultural Language Teaching is bringing to the profession is explored in existing and promising ways by the various contributors to ***Teaching Language, Teaching Culture*** who look closely at what it means to teach culture as an integrated part of language from both the language learner and the language teacher's perspectives.

**Note:** This publication was first published in the Australian Review of Applied Linguistics by the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia as ***Teaching Language, Teaching Culture,*** Series S Number 14, 1997.
This reissue has been updated and includes new chapters.

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